THE HERMETIC CIRCLE

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BOOKS

THE HERMETIC CIRCLE

Hermann Hesse and C. G. Jung

22 January 1961 in Montagnola, in the Italian-speaking part of Switzerland. Lunch at Hermann Hesse's house. Outside, it is snowing; the sky, however, is not clear. I look out of the window; then at my plate of curry. As I look up from my meal towards the other end of the table, I also see Hesse's clear, transparent eyes.

- What a joy, for example, to find myself having lunch here today, in your company...!

- Nothing happens by chance, replies Hesse. These are the only SOME PEOPLE: HERMETICA is CIRCLE.

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Demian

My first encounter with Hermann Hesse's work took place in 1945, or perhaps earlier. I don't recall who lent me Demian. At that time, Hesse was virtually unknown in Chile. He was discussed in small circles, as if he were a secret. Indeed, outside Germany his fame was limited. It was in 1946 that the public became aware of his existence, when he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature. From then on, he became part—I would say with a wry smile—of the authors translated into other languages. However, there are countries where Hesse remains an author who does not arouse great enthusiasm. For the English-speaking public, Hermann Hesse is a refined writer and his translations are not a publishing success. In fact, his complete works have not been translated into English. In London, I had to search a little for his best-known work to give as a gift to a friend of mine who had never heard of the German writer's books. What a contrast to the Spanish-speaking public, who read and reread Hesse's work, regarding him as a Master who opened up new spiritual horizons for an eager young generation.

"It is strange that the difference between the Anglo-Saxon and Spanish-speaking publics regarding Hesse's work was particularly marked; it was the Latin American reader who received the German author with the greatest enthusiasm; and within Latin America, this was the case in Chile, Argentina and Mexico." I do not know whether the writer came to have admirers to the same extent in the rest of the world. In India, for example, his book *Siddhartha*, although translated into Bengali, Hindi and other local languages, is not widely known and circulated only among minorities who are not particularly enthusiastic.

During my nearly ten-year stay in India, I encountered many examples of this, including the case of Krishna Prem, a monk and former student of the late monk, who holds a PhD in English from Cambridge, is a Bhakti philosopher, a devotee of Krishna, and author of the interesting book *The Yoga of the Katha Upanishad*, and who has lived there for over thirty years in the vicinity of the religious town of Almora, in the foothills of the Himalayas.

What a difference from the Latin Americans! A Mexican painter gave me a box of colour slides depicting the Magister Musicae and José Siervo de The Game of the Glass Beads. The old professor is seated at the piano, whilst the young servant accompanies him on the violin in the first sonata they played together. The painter sent the box as a gift from Hesse, and Hesse recommended that I meet him in Delhi. I had to make an effort to ensure the painter did not move to India.

The passion that Hesse unleashed in Spanish souls can only be compared to that which he undoubtedly awakens, or has awakened, among Germans of an entire generation.

The Mexican painter's attitude felt true to me because that is what happened to me and continues to happen. Even today, I might travel the world in search of a book when I believe it is essential or the nourishment my soul needs. And to venerate its author with a 'presence and figure' greater than any that has ever arisen within me on this tormented earth of love. So strange is the lukewarm youth of our day, awaiting the pleasure of the work, not the pursuit of anything other than worship. I could starve, steal to get the money to buy a book. I never

wanted to borrow one, because I wanted it to be absolutely mine, to have a close relationship with it for hours and days on end.

Just as with people, so it is with books: they have a destiny of their own, for they are meant for people who await them, seeking them out at the right moment. Books live, die and are reborn; they are made of pulsating matter that loves and makes its way through the darkness, often after the death of their authors.

Hesse said that *Siddhartha* made its way into India twenty years after its publication, and even then – though he was unaware of it – only to a limited extent. Earlier, Hesse had given his book to friends to read, often without receiving a thank-you note. For the work to have a profound impact, it required years of solitude.

So, as I mentioned, Hesse's first work came into my hands in 1945. *Demian* was that magical book. Why did it make such a unique impression on me? Waves of energy flowed from its pages. The book had been written many years earlier. Perhaps I hadn't even been born when it was conceived.

Many people had already been nourished by its influence; numerous editions had appeared. It came to me in translation, probably full of errors; yet it retains the energy, the power, the miracle. The words, the dream, the breath and the torment in the mind of the person who conceived it were recreated upon contact with a new mindset that received it and for which it was destined. Is that not a miracle? When its author, as a young man leaning over his desk, perhaps in Baden, near Zurich, at the 'Verenahof' table, brought his work to life, he drew upon forces already present in the realm of the spirit, though it would be unrealistic to think they could be located in any other sphere. These forces would be revived and reappear powerfully through contact with a mind and a heart that had followed the same pilgrimage.

Demian, the hero, would become the model for many lives; he had to compete with his strength and serenity against everything the archetype possessed. So I walked the streets of my city feeling like a new man, with a message and a sign. And that is also why Hesse was more than a scholar or a poet for several generations. His message reaches into areas that were previously reserved for religion. Although this phenomenon occurs in only a few of his books—I am referring to those belonging to the magical genre, not the evocative—it is primarily aimed at a German audience, as they possess a local character. For me, Hesse's works include merely *Demian*, *Journey to the East*, his fantastic autobiography *Siddhartha*, *The Glass Bead Game*, *Steppenwolf* and *Narcissus and Goldmund*. Shortly afterwards I read *The Metamorphosis of Piktor*, which will be discussed.

Demian is not really a physical being; he is not separate from Sinclair, the story's narrator. Demian is in fact Sinclair himself, his inner self; the archetype of the hero exists deep within all of us. The being, in short, remains unchanged and the soul does not change, and it is in its presence that we all seek, or ought to seek, to live.There is a message of magical pedagogy in this work; I am referring to the attempt to bring a teenager into redemptive contact with an ancient living being from whom he will draw the strength to help him overcome the dangers, riding the waves of primal chaos, especially during adolescence. All of us, to a greater or lesser extent, encounter characters like Demian during our lives, lost in early childhood: self-assured lads and, to others, venerable, serene heroes. But Demian is actually found within us. Towards the end of the novel, Demian approaches Sinclair, who is lying in a military hospital bed, kisses him on his bloodied mouth and says: 'Listen, my son, if you ever need me again, I shall not return in any more mundane way than on horseback or by train. You will find me within yourself.'

Hesse wrote this during his bleakest days, when he contemplated leaving his homeland and the war behind forever. To find Demian is to find oneself.

This message, however, is not rationalised in the book. It is shrouded in a field of magic; it is a symbol. Therefore, it can only be understood by the heart, by intuition. And it explodes, so

to speak, in the reader's soul, to whom the book came silently, 'like a thief in the night', clearing the way through the thick shadows of oblivion and penance.

That is why, many years ago, I walked through the streets of my city with a swelling in my chest, a feeling that something new had happened in my life: a message from eternity.

Abraxas

Light and darkness is life. Yet we strive to make it 'only one of those extremes'. Our soul waits in the light, with great strength, for the lofty peaks, for God. Sublime visions, exalted hopes. From childhood, first a humanist school of family upbringing, and then inscribed in the fire that corresponds to one side of the coin's values.

Western Christian civilisation aims to overcome the dark side of the coin, without finding suitable symbolism, made available to the individual who is beginning to live, so that they may accept and also interpret the shadows as well as the light patterns.

And when we fall from these heights, landing face down on the ground and feeling happy for a moment, our mind lacks the connections and signs that might help us. Thus, duality appears.

That is not true in the East, in India, where an ancient civilisation of multifaceted nature accepted its gods, to give man a simultaneous and seamless expression between light and darkness, good and evil, so that the devil was disarmed, so to speak, just like God. But the price paid is now so high that it is difficult for Mother Nature. The Hindu man is less individualistic than the Westerner; he is somewhat more of a collective soul by nature.

Well, how might the Western Christian man reach a point where, whilst remaining an individual, he might attain a state in which light and darkness, God and the devil, coexist?

One must find a Christian before Christ, God, and who may remain after him. This is the Christ of Atlantis, who once existed and may rise again from the deep waters, as the centre of a continent is restored.

God is Abraxas, god and devil at the same time.

The first time I learnt of Abraxas's existence was through Demian; but he had already been within me since my childhood, having seen the depths of the Andes and the unfathomable depths of the ocean that ravages our coast; the foam caused by the great waves echoes will-o'-the-wisps, their blaze of heaven and hell.

Abraxas is a Gnostic god; therefore, Christian before Christ; that is why he is the Christ of Atlantis. He was known by other names to the indigenous peoples of the Americas.

Hermann Hesse speaks of him as follows:

"Observe the fire, gaze at the clouds and heed the omens, and the voices of the soul will begin to sound; surrender to them without asking whether it is fitting or whether it is right. Otherwise you will be lost – you will take on a bourgeois appearance and cease to be a fossil. Our God is called Abraxas: he is God and the Devil at the same time; he holds within him the light and the dark world. Abraxas excludes none of your thoughts, nor any of your dreams; do not forget that. But he will abandon you if you take the normal, flawless path. Abandon it, and he will seek another cauldron in which to cook his thoughts.

To overcome the dramatic conflict in which Western civilisation finds itself without causing such regular apocalyptic disasters in the West and without sinking to the levels that would produce an 'orientalisation', there is no other possibility but Abraxas, that is to say, a projection of the soul around the sphere, a self-immersion into the very roots, biographical, to find there the pure archetype that was disfigured, but which is the authentic image of God " , saddened by

our sins, immediately after the sinking of Atlantis and the overwhelming waters of our own soul.

Abraxas also signifies the whole man.

Narcissus, Goldmund and Siddhartha

For those familiar with Hesse's books, names such as Narcissus, Goldmund and Siddhartha are well known. Hesse's work revolves around an ever-recurring theme. Sinclair and Demian are the same person; Narcissus and Goldmund represent two essential human tendencies: contemplation and action; the same applies to Siddhartha and Govinda: they are perhaps a single being; thus was born the deep friendship between them, the compassion, the understanding. It is self-love, charity for the soul lost between introspection and extroversion. *The Glass Bead Game* addresses the same theme through intricate reasoning, evolving fugues and arabesques, so dear to the musical soul of the Germans. Hinduism, Chinese Taoism, Zen Buddhism, and perhaps mathematics, gave voice to the original theme, which now resonates like a Bach fugue or a Leonardo painting.

When I first met Hermann Hesse, he was perhaps a little more Goldmund than Narcissus; that is to say, he had let himself wander, living in his retreat far from Montagnola in quiet introspection. Most likely, however, Hesse was, at the same time, right up to the end of his life, both Narcissus and Goldmund.

I am certain, however, that at that time I was more Goldmund than Narcissus; moreover, I was lost between these two tendencies of the personality. Like Siddhartha, I would often find the wisest friend throughout life, wearing different guises and adorned with opposing dignities.

At my first meeting, I arrived with a rucksack and a book under my arm. I was young and had just left my country.

I shall skip the details leading up to the meeting. Suffice it to say that in Switzerland, very few people knew the exact place where Hesse lived; only after much enquiry did a young woman in Bern give me the news of his whereabouts.

I took the train to Lugano. It was June 1951 and the summer heat was already being felt even in the Swiss mountains.

In Lugano, I had to ask again about the whereabouts of the writer, who was in exile in Switzerland. Someone told me that Hesse lived in Castagnola. I took the bus to the small town, where I was told that Hesse's house was in Montagnola. Another bus took me to the large village, situated opposite Lake Lugano and the snow-capped Alps. The bus wound its way up the narrow streets to reach its destination. A young woman got off with me. I asked her for the address of the writer's house. She told me she was his housekeeper and asked me to follow her.
That afternoon we arrived at the entrance to a garden. Above the gate, a sign written in German read 'Bitte, keine Besuche' (No visitors, please). Having passed through the gate and walked along a path lined with tall trees, I reached the front door of the house. There was no other inscription in German; it was translated into ancient Chinese:

Words by Mench-Hsi
When someone approached old age
and fulfil their mission,
they have the right to come to terms peacefully
with the idea of death.
You do not need men.
You already know and understand exactly what they are.
What you need is peace.
You must visit the man, talk to him,

make him suffer through trivialities.
You should rather walk away
before the door of his house,
as if no one lived there.

The young maid opened the door and led me down a dark corridor. She offered me a chair by a small table against the wall and handed me a visiting card. As I had nothing with me, I gave her my copy of *Neither by Sea nor by Land*, which I had brought especially for Hesse, with a dedication in Spanish.
The young man walked away down the corridor. I waited there for a moment, in that quiet, secluded atmosphere, enveloped in the scent of sandalwood, on that long-ago afternoon, some nineteen years ago.

Then a side door opened and a slender figure, dressed in white, appeared in the dim light. It was Hesse.

I stood up, unable to make him out clearly at first. I could only see him clearly when we crossed the corridor and entered a room with large windows. His eyes were very bright and a beautiful smile gradually spread across his slender face. He looked like an ascetic, a penitent, dressed in white linen. A special scent emanated from him—sandalwood or the resin of an old tree.

'You've come at a difficult time,' he said; 'I should have gone on holiday yesterday. Perhaps we'll travel tomorrow. My wife was stung by a bee and decided to postpone the trip… everything's in a mess here. Come to my office.'

We passed through a room lined with bookshelves reaching up to the ceiling and entered another, smaller room, where there was a table in the centre and tall bookcases, paintings, various objects, and small statues from the East.

Hesse sat with her back to the window, where the sun was setting over the distant hills and the lake. I sat opposite her, on the other side of the table, where writing papers and other objects had been cleared away.

Hesse looked at me without saying a word, a sweet smile on her lips, waiting and allowing a stranger to take in the peaceful atmosphere.

I sensed the significance of the moment. Now, as I recall that moment, I realise that those were the intense years of my life, when the soul was still capable of trembling at meetings, even though we were not yet lovers.

There I was, standing before a man I admired, and to meet him I had first crossed the ocean. And the welcome he gave me was in keeping with the circumstances that had led to this spiritual pilgrimage.

It seemed to me that Hermann Hesse had no fixed age. I believe that in June 1951 he had just turned 73; his smile, however, was that of a young man, and his whole figure seemed to have been given a patina by the disciplines of the spirit, like a thin sheet of steel, stored in a white linen sheath.

'I have come from far away,' he said, 'but the Lord is well known in my country…'

'It's curious,' said Hesse, 'the interest my books arouse among the Spanish public. I often receive letters from readers in Latin America. I'd love for you to tell me what the new translations are like, especially of *The Glass Bead Game*.

- Of course, he said. The edition of *Narcissus and Goldmund* preserves the spirit and meaning of the original.

- Narcissus and Goldmund represent two opposing tendencies of the soul: contemplation and action, even though one day they might come together…

- I understand, I added, because I live very much within that conflict, the clashes between these two extremes. I dream of the peace of contemplation, but the need to be outdoors inspires me to action. In fact, right now I'm a bit more like Narcissus… though I long to be Goldmund…

- You must let yourself be carried away by the 'white clouds'… You must not resist. God is present in this lost destination just as much as in the lake and the mountains in the distance. It is difficult and hard to understand this… Man is drifting further and further away from nature and from himself…

- Did the wisdom of India help you, sir? I ask.

- More than the Upanishads and Vedanta, I was inspired by . . . The I Ching, Chinese wisdom, can transform a life . . .

I watched the sunset. A faint blue light—or perhaps pink—lingered on the windows, also haloed the fragile figure of Hermann Hesse.

- And in these snow-capped mountains, do you find peace? he asked.

Hesse remained silent for a long while, without the gentle smile fading from his face, so that I could hear the whisper of the light, the silence of things and the evening, until the moment when the tranquillity was broken.

- Close to nature, one can hear the voice of God.

We sat there for a few more minutes, until I realised it was time to leave. Hesse presented me with a small watercolour he had painted himself, with the words 'Montagnola Souvenir' written on the back. He loved painting and was a fine watercolourist.

Then he accompanied me to the door; as we said goodbye, he shook my hand as if I were an old friend and said:

- If you come back again, you might not find me here.

That is how my first meeting went.

Those who are still young enough to ask the questions that led Hesse to that evening, or those who made Siddhartha into a Buddha, will understand my impressions.

Back in the narrow alleys of Montagnola, I found the bus, but a young man took me to Lugano on his motorbike.

That very night I found myself in Florence, this city brimming with Renaissance magic.

Those were the years of the impoverished war, and Italy continued to seek refuge in the dollar and the alcohol of the occupying troops.

The cities and the years

MANY YEARS would pass before my next meeting with Hermann Hesse. However, during that time, we did not communicate. His messages were far more subtle. It is strange, and I cannot help but wonder what happened to me. Separated by years, distance, cultural backgrounds and continents, a true friendship, woven into a breathtaking tapestry, created itself, until it became something of destiny. The world-admired writer, the Master, the Mentor so to speak, reached out to an ageing man to an unknown young man, hailing from a small, almost lost corner of the country at the far end of the world, and made him his friend, going so far as to say to him on his final day: 'I have no friends of my own age; they have all died…'

After my departure for India in 1953, my correspondence with Hesse became more frequent, as he had always been imbued with ancient Hindu wisdom that nourished his work and his soul. I informed him that I was leaving without telling him I was a diplomat, as he remained a pilgrim with his walking stick and his bag on his back, just as when I had first visited him at his sanctuary high in the Alps.

My life and experiences in India are recounted in my book *The Serpent Gave Paradise*. I shall add nothing more now, save that for years Hesse sent me little sign, yet he also received the hermit who did not appreciate luxury. Sometimes they were photographs; other times, paintings, poems, books.

Our friendship was certainly not a literary one, but a magical, ageless, timeless bond: an encounter in the midst of the eternal river of things.

Montagnola is a small town built on Lake Lugano. It consists of neat, narrow streets lined with well-kept houses, some quite old, and has been depicted by Hesse in his watercolours of Ticino. For many years, the writer lived on a floor of an old house, with balustrades and windows overlooking a lush garden and hills. On one of the house's balconies he wrote *Klingsor's Summer*, a story of burning passion, as intense as the heat of those days.

He often went to sit on the stone steps of the garden and admire the balcony and the railings of the house, which was built by Swiss architects who had served as mercenaries in the army with which Napoleon invaded Russia. Following the defeat of the Corsican, the mercenaries remained to rebuild Moscow, later returning to Switzerland where the wealthiest among them became wealthy landowners.

I saw this beautiful mansion during the dry summer and also with its roofs covered in winter snow. The plane trees, standing guard in the alley opposite, showed me their dry, dark branches as well as their spring blossoms.

Hesse was then living in another house further away, on a hill, with a large orchard of fruit trees and vegetable garden. It had been built especially for him by a friend who had since passed away.

It was this house that I visited for the first time and to which I would return many years later.

To reach Montagnola, I spent some time in Locarno and Ascona, these two beautiful towns in Italian-speaking Switzerland. In Locarno, I would first meet Professor Jung.

It was 1 March 1959. Almost eight years had passed. He had represented my country in India, in the role of ambassador. A new incarnation. Siddhartha met his friend again, dressed in different clothes.

The other garments mirrored Maia, the ghostly screen of the Grand Illusion.

The car carrying me was climbing once more up those narrow streets, past the fences and adorned gardens.

By chance, I stopped in front of an inn. Its owner was Mr Ceccarelli; his wife, the well-known Hesse, called asking for an interview there.

Hesse made an appointment for that very afternoon. I walked through the doorway, the memory of which remained fixed in my mind. And once again I found myself in the room with the large windows. It was once again before the writer, who was now eighty years old. Yet his face was the same and his smile— —remained as beautiful as ever, though tinged with an indefinable sadness.

He shook my hand and said:

'Yes, I remember you, sir.'

I felt different. I was no longer the pilgrim of yesteryear. Harsh Asian climates and other demanding pursuits had left their scars on me. My heart was beating with excitement, even before meeting my friend.

Mrs Hesse entered the room and invited us to sit down. She was considerably younger than the writer, with a face and a secret beauty in her voice and discreet smile.

Hesse undoubtedly tried to recall the memory of our first meeting.

'What is India like?' he asked. 'It has caused great suffering for many people. I visited it many years ago in honour of my grandfather and my father. My grandfather brought back a statue of Krishna, the blue dancer, which is so dear to me... I had a friend in India, Professor Kalidasa Nath, in Kolkata...' Is he still alive? I wonder if you've heard from him, and if he is alive, please give him my regards. He visited me once, in the company of Romain Rolland.

- I shall. I have brought you these little mementos.

And I'm giving you a sandalwood incense stick and an old Kangra Valley miniature. It depicts two women walking along a dark road in the monsoon rain, with lightning flashing across the sky. One of the women is resting gently on the other's shoulder.

- Perhaps Princess Fatima, for example, whom you sought in your book Journey to the East.

Hesse smiled and continued to look at the painting. He took his wife's hand and pointed to the young man, leaning on his companion's shoulder.

- Note the delicacy of this hand.

Written on the back of the picture: 'For Hermann Hesse, the world of symbols' Explanation:

- Because you lived out your own symbols, your own legend, and, in your work, you develop and repeat them, expanding upon them.

His wife stepped out for a moment and returned shortly afterwards with a bottle of old wine. She placed it on the table and rested Hesse's miniature on it, continuing to admire it.

- I've just come back from Locarno; I've been to see Professor Jung. He interprets the symbols, analyses them. It's curious, but India doesn't give his work the recognition it deserves.

'India doesn't interpret symbols: it lives them. My book *Siddhartha* also took twenty years to reach India, its true home. Only now has it been translated into Hindi, Bengali and other languages. There is in India a kind of selfishness that is mental, yet its strength; unlike Japan, where people assimilate everything that is foreign. I believe that mental selfishness is necessary.

- Yes, I replied. India revolves around its own millennia-old creations. Indian writers are the exegetes of their traditions and their sacred texts; they immerse themselves in the past, the collective unconscious, which repeats itself as a mass. That is also why they are sacred, perhaps eternal...

- That is why Buddhism disappeared from India, Hesse continued; it was too intellectual and denied the world of symbols... But let's get back to Jung , I believe he has the right to interpret symbols. And do you know why? Because Jung is a towering figure, an extraordinary genius... he's been ill of late... I met him through a mutual friend, who was also interested in the interpretation of symbols. I haven't seen him for a few years now. If I meet him again, give him my regards from Steppenwolf.

He smiled happily.

- Jung asked what it is that is called the 'I' (NT – Some of Jung's followers in Brazil use the English word 'I'), and linked it to Christ. He told me that for Western man, Christ is the Self.

Hesse's smile faded. There was a moment of silence. He went back to admiring the painting, leaning on the wine bottle, looked at his wife and said:

- We need to find something for our friend from Chile and India.

He focuses on one of the bookshelves crammed with books up to the ceiling and climbs a small ladder to reach those at the top. He grabs one and jumps down.

His wife approaches him and tenderly strokes his head, for the writer had made a great effort despite his poor state of health at that moment.

Mrs Ceccarelli warned me that Hesse had arthritis and advised me not to shake his hand too firmly so as not to hurt him.

Hesse hands me a beautiful book printed in his own handwriting, in Gothic style, and illustrated with watercolours by himself depicting something akin to a heavenly state. The small book is titled *La Metamorfosis Piktor* and is housed in a case resembling an old Chinese box. Hesse writes the following dedication on the first page: 'To a guest from Chile and India'.

We drink a final glass of wine. I rise to leave; Hesse, however, leads me into the dining room, where he wishes to show me an oil painting of his hometown, Cawl. There is a bridge over the river; I think that perhaps, gazing at its waters, Hesse first noticed the fish that Goldmund and Siddhartha saw, and traced that chain which, like the sacred rivers of India, all leads towards the great sea.

Hesse then approaches a stone bust leaning against the wall. It is his own head, carved by a sculptor friend. He places his hand upon it.

I ask him:

- Is it important to know if there is anything beyond life?

- No, it isn't important... Dying is like falling into Jung's collective unconscious and then returning from there as another, as form, forms...

Hesse, stroking his stone head.

The Metamorphoses of Piktor

It is NIGHT at Mr Ceccarelli's inn. With the hills opening up, almost a window of starlight, I read the little book.

The young man entered Piktor Paradise and found himself standing before a tree that was both man and woman. He approached it with reverence and asked, 'Are you, perhaps, the tree of life?' When, however, instead of the tree, the serpent replied, Piktor went on his way. He observed everything carefully: all the pleasures of Paradise. He clearly foresees that he is at the source, the fountainhead of life.

He sees another tree, which is now both Sun and Moon

And Piktor asks: "Is this perhaps the Tree of Life?" The Sun confirmed with a laugh; the Moon smiled.

Marvellous flowers admired him, flowers of various colours, flowers that had eyes and faces. Some laughed heartily, others winked; some neither laughed nor moved, remaining silent, intoxicated, lost in themselves, enveloped in their own fragrance as if suffocated. A lilac-coloured flower sang its song; another, a dark blue lullaby. One flower's eyes were hard as sapphire; another reminded him of his first love; another, of the colours of the garden of his childhood, his mother's voice and her perfume. One laughed, another stuck out her slightly curved, pinkish tongue towards him. Piktor stretched out his tongue to touch it. He felt the tart taste of wild grapes and honey, and also like a woman's kiss.

Amidst the flowers, Piktor felt filled with nostalgia and fear. His heart beat strongly, like a bell, burning, yearning for something unknown.

Piktor then saw a bird lying in the grass, shining in a way that seemed to contain every colour. Piktor asked:

- O bird, where is happiness?

- Happiness? But it is everywhere: in the mountains and in the valley, in the flower and in the crystal

The happy bird shook its feathers, moved its neck, fluttered its tail, turned one eye and remained motionless on the grass. Suddenly it had turned into a flower; feathers were leaves, legs were roots. Piktor looked at it in amazement.

Almost immediately, however, the flower-bird moved its leaves; tired of being a flower and having no roots. Soaring languidly upwards, it turned into a butterfly, moving weightlessly, all light.

Piktor marvelled even more. The cheerful butterfly-bird fluttered its wings in a circle around him, shining like the sun; it glided to the ground and, like a snowflake, came to rest there, at Piktor's feet. Breathing, it trembled for a moment with its luminous wings and suddenly turned into crystal, its songs radiating a red light. It shone beautifully amongst the grass, like bells ringing for a festival.

Only the jewel shone.

But it seemed its end was near; the earth drew it in and the gem was rapidly shrinking, as if to sink into the grass.

Piktor, driven by a sudden impulse, picked up the jewel in his hands and held it. He gazed in awe at its magical light; his heart was filled with a burning desire for all manner of adventures.

It was then that the branch of a dead tree, from which the Serpent had slipped, whispered in his ear: "The jewel turns into a tree. Say your wish quickly, before it is too late."

Piktor feared missing the chance to find happiness. In a hurry, he uttered the secret word. And he turned into a tree. For a tree was what Piktor had always wanted to be. For trees are full of calm, strength and dignity.

Slowly, it grew its roots into the ground and raised its crown towards the sky. New leaves and branches sprouted from its trunk. It was content with itself. Its thirsty roots absorbed water from the soil, whilst the leaves swayed in the blue sky. Insects lived in its bark, and at its feet, hares and porcupines found refuge.

In Paradise, behind him, most things and beings were transformed by the spell of metamorphosis. I saw beasts that turned into precious stones or flew away like radiant birds. Beside him, several trees suddenly vanished: they moved into the rivers; one became a crocodile, another was swimming, full of delight, and turned into a fish. New forms, new games.

The elephants have transformed their bodies into rocks; the giraffes have become monstrous flowers.

But he, the Tree-Painter, remained always the same; he could be no other.

Realising this, his happiness gradually faded; he began to age, taking on the supposed weariness and grave appearance seen in many old trees.

Likewise, horses and birds, humans and all beings who have lost the gift of metamorphosis, decay with time, lose their beauty, and are filled with sadness and worry.

Once, a girl got lost in paradise. Her skin was red and her dress blue. Singing and dancing, she approached the Tree-Piktor. Some clever monkeys laughed merrily behind her; bushes brushed her body with their branches; trees scattered flowers or fruit, without her noticing. And when the Piktor tree saw the girl, he was overcome by an unknown desire, a deep longing for happiness. It felt as

though his blood was crying out: 'Think, remember your whole life today, discover a meaning; if you do not, it will be too late and you will never be happy again!'

And Piktor obeyed. He remembered his past, his adult years, his departure for the heavens, and above all that moment before his transformation into a tree, that marvellous moment when the magical jewel was imprisoned in his hands. Then, as all transformations are possible, life pulsed strongly within him.

He remembered the bird that had laughed and the Sun and Moon tree; it seemed to him that at that moment he had been somewhat forgotten, had stopped doing something, and the deadly serpent's advice had been heeded.

The girl heard the howling of the leaves of the Piktor Tree, its rustling branches. She looked up and felt a pain in her heart. Unknown thoughts, desires and dreams gripped her. Drawn by these forces, she sat down in the shade of its branches. She realised that the tree was lonely and sad, yet at the same time stirring and noble in its total isolation. The intoxicating sound of the branches' murmuring song. The girl leaned against the rough bark; it touched her, and a shiver ran through her body. Clouds passed over the roof of her soul. Little by little, tears fell from her heavy eyes. What was that? Why must I suffer? Why did her heart yearn, her chest long for something beyond the beauty of Solitary?

The tree—Piktor—trembled at its roots and gathered all its life-forces, directing them towards the girl in a desire to unite with her forever. Ah, had he been deceived by the Serpent, and was he now merely a tree? How blind and foolish he had been! How alien to him the secrets of life! No, there must have been something, for then he would have sensed it vaguely! And with great sadness, the tree remembered that he had once been a man and a woman.

Then a bird flew out in circles, a red and green bird. The girl saw it coming. Something fell from its beak. Shining like lightning, red as blood and embers, running across the grass, lighting it up. The girl bent down to pick it up. It was an emerald, a precious stone. As soon as she held the stone in her hands, the desire of her heart's sigh was fulfilled. Fascinated, she joined and became one with the tree, turning into a strong green twig that quickly grew into the sky.

Now everything was perfect and the world was in order.

Only then was paradise found. Piktor was no longer an old, troubled tree. So he sang aloud, with strength: 'Piktória Victoria!' He had transformed, but had reached the eternal truth in the polymorph; for the half had become a whole.

From now on, he could become whatever he wished.

The spell of the chain of creation always ran through his blood, thus participating, forever, in the creation that was renewed at every moment. Was it the flesh of the deer, the fish, the man and the serpent, the bird and the cloud; but in every sense it was everything, every image was a pair within him—he had the Sun and the Moon, he was man and woman. Like the twin river, it flowed through the lands; like a double star, it crossed the sky.

Just as on that gentle night Montagnola finished reading the book and looked at its illustrations, whose colours truly reflected a state of return to the beginning of things, and pondered a phrase that Hesse once wrote:

"To some men, in their old age, the grace is granted to experience once more the paradisiacal state of childhood."

In those drawings, and in that story—naive yet profound. It was truly a vision of paradise regained.

And whilst I was intoxicated by the scent of the magnolias in the garden blooming at the mountain lodge, and by the other fragrance of Paradise, I returned to see, with the clarity of insomnia, Hermann Hesse's hand resting on his stone bust and heard his words in harmony with the story I had just read: "Let us return to form, to forms…"

Morning

I got up early and went into the garden to look down on Lake Lugano, illuminated by the first rays of the sun. I walked slowly through the narrow streets until I found myself once again near Hesse's old house. The dark sycamore trees stretched out their leafless branches.

As the morning wore on, I took the path that runs past the house where the writer lived. To my surprise, I saw Hesse in the vegetable garden, standing by the fence, wearing a wide-brimmed hat and making a fire with dry grass. He saw me and opened the garden gate.

'Good morning,' he said, extending his hand.

I returned his greeting by showing him the book *Metamorfosis Piktor*, which I had with me.

He held it and pointed out some drawings to me, smiling like a child.

'They're wonderful,' I cried.

"Are they crystals, birds, butterflies—all of this for a moment, just like in the Creation?"

"And Piktor?" he asked.

"Piktor contains everything; it is all this and something more…"

'It is the river of Siddhartha,' he said, 'the eternal forms of the river Maya.'

- And also the Steppenwolf, added Hesse. There are people who cannot understand that he wrote Siddhartha whilst writing The Steppenwolf... And yet, the two complement each other; they are the two extremes of life, between which men move...

Hesse paused. He handed me Piktor's Metamorphoses and said aloud to himself:

- Yesterday, when you visited me, was my son's birthday. He turned fifty...

Thus ended our meeting.

I set off along the path leading up the hill. I came to a clearing and lay down in the dry grass near some trees. I gathered a couple of leaves in my hand and tried to find the stone of metamorphosis. But I couldn't. I turned back the way I had come. Hermann Hesse was still burning on the lawn. Shrouded in smoke, the scene resembled an ancient ritual. I sat down on a rock. He couldn't see me now, and I watched him for quite a while. A figure then came down from the top of the house, and as they approached, I realised it was his wife.

She carried a basket on her shoulder and gently stroked his grey hair. I understood that the gesture was meant to please Hesse, and I felt a certain embarrassment at the NAFTA. It was heartbreaking to think that this mature woman wanted to look beautiful for an eighty-year-old man. The bond between them must be deeply spiritual and sensitive. I got up to leave. I watched as they walked along the path through the orchard; she walked ahead and behind him, gathering herbs and placing them in the basket.

I thought of how the wise men of ancient China must once have lived. Indeed, Hesse looked like a Chinese master and also like a wise tree.

As he passed in front of the house, he saw me again. He turned around, took off his wide-brimmed hat and waved goodbye.

Master Dyu-Dschi

I returned to Hesse Montagnola to bring one of the first copies of my book *The People of the Queen of Sheba*, written in India and with a foreword by Dr Jung.

It was Sunday 22 January 1961. It was winter in Europe. Snow now covered the village. As always, I was first gazing at the old house and saw the white-clad plane trees, stripped bare of their branches. I entered the room leading onto the terrace overlooking the garden; everything here was covered in snow. It was impossible now to recall the Ticino spring.

Little by little, I made my way up to the hill where Hesse's house stood.

We were stumbling along the steep path when I heard the sound of a car. I stepped aside to let it pass, but the car stopped and someone waved at me. It was Hesse. His wife was driving. The car door opened for me to get in.

'I've just come from town,' said Hesse; 'I went to buy it for you.'

And he handed me a copy of the Neue Zürcher Zeitung.

A poem of his had been published in the Sunday supplement.

'With this poem, it will answer any question you might ask me today,' he said then.

We arrived home almost immediately and walked through the family room.

Hesse and I sat down. He looked a little thinner than he had two years ago. I picked up the newspaper and began to read the poem:

The Raised Finger

Master Dyu-Dschi was – as we are told –

a man of quiet, gentle and very modest ways,

who renounced words and teachings

because words and appearances

and avoiding any pretence

was his concern.

When students, monks and novices

was appreciated in high-flown conversations

with spiritual phrases about the supreme cry,

about why the world, he observed in silence

avoiding any exaggeration.

And when asked,

whether in vain or in earnest,

about the meaning of ancient writings,

in the name of Buddha, enlightenment,

the beginning and the end of the world remained

in silence and gradually just pointed

with a finger raised upwards.

And with a tacit, convincing gesture,

it became increasingly clear:

admonished, taught, praised, punished, it points

his own path through the heart of the world

and the fact that, in recent years,

more than one disciple understood the delicate

raised a finger,

he awoke and shuddered.

Hesse stood with his finger raised and remained silent, watching the snowflakes fall gently beside the windows. It was he who broke the silence:

- Words are a mask that rarely express correctly what lies behind them; rather, they conceal it. It is not intelligence that matters, but imagination. Those who are capable of living in fantasy have no need for religion. It is through fantasy that one can understand man's return to the Universe. I repeat now that it does not matter if there is anything beyond this life. What counts is having done the work well. In that way, everything will be all right. The Universe, for me, means what God is for others. The Universe, Nature. We must not regard it as an enemy, but as a mother, and surrender ourselves to Nature peacefully, with love. As far as we know, we feel that the individual returns to the Universe, just as all beings do, just as animals do, just as plants do. We are but tiny parts of the whole, of the Universe. It is absurd to rebel. We must offer ourselves to the great current, like a mother…

- 'And the self?' I ask. She hesitates. In the East, the self is not as Christianity conceives it. The self is a product of Christianity, like love, a by-product of personality. Without the self, there is no love; at least, not the madness of love.

Hesse agrees that the person is a product of the Christian West.

I continue:

- Beauty too, the concept of individualised beauty, is a product of personality. The beauty of a gesture, the attitude of a personal life, is also, just like the streets, squares, cathedrals and cities of the West. Nature is also beautiful. But in a different way. Temples and monuments of the East are beautiful, but in the same way as a waterfall or a forest, in an impersonal way. I know that some swamis showed that coldness before the beauty of Florence. It is that for the average person it has not appeared, the personal has not been understood, nor love towards the Western Christian. Obviously, this is not a review and if it were it could apply in some way to the West, since no one knows if the person prefers not a disease or evil itself...

I pause and think of what Hesse once said about his book, and how he remarked that *Siddhartha* only entered India twenty years after its publication. Even today, it is a book that orthodox Hindus consider 'artificial', a product of Western Christian speculation about the truths of the East. The drama of Siddhartha is the drama of the individual soul, the search for a way out of the personality; and the acts of conscience that Siddhartha undergoes in the middle and at the end of his life are the result of the constant presence of reason.

- It's curious that, just as Hindus keep circling back to their Vedas and Bhagavad Gita, they don't create anything new. Even modern abstract painters end up interpreting the Ramayana.

- But I consider this a good thing; therein lies the strength of Hinduism. It continues to follow the same path; it is concentration, in contrast to dispersion. Remember: what you really want... On the other hand, if Hindus read little, it is because the British did not provide them with translations of European

and universal thought. I think I see a hidden desire in what you say, , to defend the West because the West is losing ground today as the East rises again. It is impossible not to feel sympathy for the weak.

- No, that's not it. Why would it be? I don't feel sympathy for the West; at least, I don't feel it any more than for the East. I belong to neither one nor the other, and as a South American, I'm better off between them...

Hesse raises a finger like Master Dyu-Dschi...

- Don't forget, for example, the mask of words...

Mrs Hesse enters and invites us into the dining room. The room is bathed in light. On the wall hangs a painting of Cawl, the writer's hometown.

Mrs Elsy Bodmer, the widow of the house's owner and a friend of Hesse's, has also been invited.

Hesse tells me that lunch will be served in the Hindu style.

- When I was a child in our home in Cawl, we always had curry on Sundays and the neighbourhood children would have lunch with us. My grandfather and my father were in India. Thanks to them, I have learnt to love Krishna.

Hesse pours Ticino wine and raises a toast. A ray of cold sunlight strikes the crystal glasses, creating an alchemy of the morning's colours. I rest my hands on the table and watch the scene with serenity. At the far end of the picture is Hesse, glass raised, illuminated by the white winter light, his eyes very blue, as if in meditation.

'Why am I here?' I say, letting the words flow slowly to Hesse. 'Why do I feel happy to be at home, eating in your company, having come so far?'

Hesse maintains his solemn expression, and without stepping out of the winter light that surrounds him, replies:

- Nothing happens by chance; here there are only the right guests: the hermetic circle...

I realise that your words have crossed the threshold this time; the shell has penetrated the core, or they belong to the realm that only symbols can reach.

Hesse has now given meaning to my pilgrimage and wanderings, speaking as Siddhartha once spoke to Govinda.

He remained silent, for it seemed to me that, within the light, Master Dyu-Dschi repeated his gesture.

A Letter

Upon returning to India, Hesse sent the following letter:

"Dear Mr Hesse:

I wish to thank you for the Sunday and the privilege of belonging to the Hermetic Circle, which is equivalent to being a member of the Order of the Journey to the East. In fact, I am a member of this Order without space or time, and Dr Jung said this in Kusnacht when he repeated his words about 'certain people'. Perhaps this is why he wrote the foreword to my book, as he is also one of the masters of the Journey to the East. Seeking only to follow this path, with just a bridge of contact (in this case between South America, Europe and Asia) as was revealed to me the other day by the I Ching.

Returning to India, I reread your poem about Master Dyu-Dschi carefully and understand its meaning. You said that the words were a mask. It is true, but it is also true that beneath the dialogue of words there is another, deeper stream of dialogue, and that is what matters and what we hear.

Please give my regards to Professor Jung Steppenwolf. He smiled and asked after you. We spoke of many things, and he too could make the gesture of Master Dyu-Dschi…

The Last Meeting

Hesse's book, Journey to the East, is the story of one of the journeys the author dedicates to his characters, his idols and his myths. A journey with his own soul, which is perhaps half his life in the midst of a mission or a pilgrimage towards the East (hence the light), as part of an order of pilgrims, of which you are the pilgrim of the East. The quest stretches across mountains and valleys, perhaps in the Alps, but more likely takes place on the cliffs and landscapes within the author's soul. The East is the homeland of the soul, the youth of light.

The pilgrims sought impossible things. One wanted to find the Kundalini Serpent; Hesse sought Princess Fatima. Among the pilgrims was a man called Leo, the Servant, who helped the others. The great festival of symbols was held in Bremgarten with lights, songs and memories. Not everyone is present: there is Don Quixote, Hölderlin, Hesse's favourite poet, Hoffmann, Heinrich von Ofterdingen, and also the characters from his books—Steppenwolf, Demian, Paul the musician, Klingsor the painter, Narcissus, Goldmund, Siddhartha and Govinda—those in whom Hesse was reincarnated throughout his long existence.

But something happens, something tragic. Leo, the Servant, disappears, leaving them behind, and thus the journey to the East is interrupted. Friends scatter; the Order crumbles. Who is Leo, whose disappearance brings about this disaster? Hesse did not realise this until much later; Leo reappears in his work, perhaps as Josef Knecht, the Grand Master of the Bead Game (Hesse's book dedicated to the pilgrim of the East), the Pope of an order. Knecht in German means 'servant'. The book Journey to the East concludes with a curious symbol: the discovery of a statuette in a magical cabinet.

This figure is androgynous, Ardhanarlsvara. But first we had to go through various trials, including the dog Necker and the reunion with Leo, the Servant.

Of all Hesse's works, Journey to the East is the most hermetic. I have never attempted to interpret it, preferring to experience its subtle beauty, particularly in its first part.

In my last interview with Hesse, I asked him about Journey to the East, about Leo and the dog Necker.

It was Saturday, 6 May 1931. I didn't spend much time visiting Hesse. I took him two boxes of carved silver, from Kashmir, inlaid with turquoise. One was for Hesse; the other for Professor Jung.

- I'm from Florence, as I said; I was there just to see the Uffizi Gallery, Leonardo's painting 'The Annunciation'. I stayed there for about an hour, admiring it.

- What is of particular interest in this painting?

- I shall try to explain. In a work such as Leonardo's, a message is conveyed without needing to be deciphered, as in *Journey to the East*, for example… *The Annunciation* is suffused with vibrations. The angel's wings are trembling in the air, especially the fingers of his right hand, making the sign. These fingers convey something to the Virgin and the other mortals, but the hypnotic warning is conveyed through his gaze. I would almost dare to say that the angel is conveying the terrible news of Christ to the Virgin with his gaze; he pierces her, leaving her pregnant. She, a frightened girl, receives the message and the warning in her gentle left hand whilst her right hand holds the sacred text, the prophecies and destiny. Then she says: 'I was writing.'

That final detail, however, is merely one of Leonardo's virtuosities to appease the Church, I would say. The truth is that the Virgin was taken by surprise and simply accepted all this because she is hypnotised, possessed by the Angel, and will never again be what she was… At the bottom of that dreamlike Leonardesque frame, the unconscious, where everything enters, the mystery, appear Destiny, the Angel and Christ himself…

Hesse listened attentively.

'Leonardo was a universal genius and his painting is magical,' he says. 'Most people only understand what they grope for with their senses, but not what lies behind what is unattainable. Magic, magical art expresses... There is also another kind of art, the evocative...

- Demian and his journey to the East are part of this magical tradition... By the way, who is Leo?

Hesse looks towards an 'open window, through which a meowing cat enters. He runs his hand over the cat's back and says:

- Leo is someone who knows how to talk to animals... with Necker the dog, for example... A friend of mine had a dog he was forced to give away. They took the dog fifty miles from his home. The dog ran away and came back, finding the way, the path. This too is magical...

- I had a dog in Antarctica many years ago, for instance, and it got lost on one of the glaciers... Returning to Leonardo, which composer, in your opinion, comes closest to me in music? Who would be a magical musician?

- Bach, Hesse replies; above all, the Mass and the Passions according to St Matthew and St John are magical works. Whenever he could, he travelled to Zurich when these works were performed.

- Yes, in Bach's work—especially in his Masses—there is a repetition or further elaboration of the themes he explored throughout his life. They are always variations on the same themes— , the myths and legends surrounding his life and work—just as with Leonardo, and just as we see today… This is magical…

Hesse stands up and walks over to his bookcase.

- He wrote 'something after The Glass Bead Game' – I ask.

- Evocations. The poet's work is also to remember, to revive the past, the ephemeral. This… is part of the poet's work.

Then show me an Italian translation of some of its pages.

- Finally, the Italians are translating me. And to think I live in the Italian-speaking part of Switzerland! On the other hand, the Spanish publisher Aguilar publishes my complete works.

I ask them to look and tell me if they are accurate. In Germany, we are in the midst of an invasion of translations of Spanish-language writers.

Hesse hands me a German edition by the Venezuelan writer Rómulo Gallegos.

Before saying goodbye for the afternoon, we talk about a few writers. I ask him if he knew Rilke.

- He tells me they never met. Speaking of translations, I think Rilke is better understood in translation.

- And Keyserling, did you know him?

- Yes, he was an extraordinary, immense, powerful man, capable of bellowing like a bull.

And Hesse tries to imitate the bellow.

- And Gustav Meyrink, what was he like?

- I knew him, that Meyrink. He took an interest in magic and practised it seriously. In moments of danger, he could concentrate on his heart, remaining calm and unflappable. He was a man gifted with a keen sense of humour. Once, in the middle of a séance, just as the visitor from the other world was about to appear, Meyrink lit a match to see him, to end the séance, of course. Meyrink wavered between the boundaries of white and black magic.

As we said goodbye that afternoon, Mrs Hesse invited me to lunch the following day.

Sunday, 7 May 1961

Early on Sunday, I arrived at the same room to continue the conversation from the previous evening.

- Koestler wrote a book about the East, India and Japan: The Lotus and the Robot. He harshly criticises the writer Suzuki.

- You can be sure that Suzuki won't lose any sleep over this. He'll see through the game.

He does not allow himself to be touched. I recall the story they tell about Jesus. He was walking through the streets of Jerusalem with the intention of healing a sick woman; stopping suddenly, he exclaimed: 'Who has touched my clothes, causing me to lose my ability to heal?'

- I was with Koestler in India, researching material for his book. I invited him to dinner at my home in New Delhi and then went to visit a Sufi mystic, Sister Raihana. She read the lines on the back of his hand. Koestler said that in a previous life he had been an army chaplain.

- Are you writing anything at the moment? asked Hesse.

- I've already spent five years working on a book about my experiences in India, a quest between the two worlds. Perhaps I shouldn't write it.

- Have you thought of a title?

- Yes, the title came to me whilst contemplating the ruins of Angkor in Cambodia. The road leading to the great temples is lined with stone serpent figures. And the same is true of the path to liberation. The Kundalini Serpent, sought on his journey to the East, coils at the base of the spine, which should be the Tree of Paradise. The truth is that my book will deal with the serpent and the tree. And that is why its title is 'The Serpent Gave Paradise'. It is a symbolic and subjective journey in terms of its… I am particularly interested in this science of the Kundalini Serpent…

Hesse says:

- Kundalini is knowledge. Yoga seeks to elevate the animal to a higher plane; like alchemy, sublimation. It is an ancient, archaic technique.

- 'Have you practised yoga?' I ask.

- Only breathing yoga, a long time ago, though it is preferable to follow the Chinese path rather than Hindu yoga. It is very difficult and even dangerous to tread these paths in the West, where there is a climate suitable for practices that require complete solitude and an environment such as that found only in India. Here we are too attached to the news. Only in India can one practise true yoga.

I'm not convinced by what Hesse says. In Montagnola, where he lives in almost complete isolation, amidst the heights and beautiful solitude. I practised concentration in the Andes mountains and even in the hotels and streets of crowded cities.

- The mind, I say, is like a radio: it sends and receives, and places what appears, in the heights or depths. It is not in itself a collective mind that receives such waves. I do not believe that external social action, or physical contact, is essential to produce the desired effect; on the contrary... In Benares, the holy city, some solitary Brahmins concentrate, repeating ancient mantras and incantations, to ensure

peace in the world... Perhaps they can achieve more than the United Nations... Yes, the mind is like a radio...

Hesse says:

- The matter is more complicated, more subtle. Only in India today is there a practical and prudent way of living this kind of life. Here, amongst us, only in some Catholic convents... You may be able to live that life there; but I find myself on a different path...

- With the Benedictines?

Hesse nods.

- And what will happen in the future, with interplanetary travel, space rockets, Sputniks and super-technology? Will man still be able to concern himself with the problems of the spirit and salvation?

- Ah! - says Hesse. - In fifty years' time, the earth will be a graveyard of machinery, and man will be in space, piloting sputniks; the cockpit will be his own vehicle!

Lunch was served. We moved to the dining room.

She was there with a daughter of Hugo Bali, Hesse's first biographer and author of Byzantine Christianity. Hesse stayed in touch with the mother and exchanged a very interesting correspondence, which was published in a beautiful book.

I look again at the painting of Calw – a small town, an old bridge, the river – and resolve to visit this German town one day, where Hesse wrote some beautiful passages. Hesse returns more and more to the emotions of his youth (for 'some chosen ones are granted, in their later years, a taste of those emotions akin to Paradise that are experienced in childhood').

Mrs Hesse says:

- I've always liked snakes.

At the far end of the table, solemn, standing out against his stone bust, is Hermann Hesse. His smile, that of an old boy returning from Paradise, was earned through fair play with his soul, through love and a passion for nature. Hesse raises his glass of red wine and says in Spanish:

- Cheers!

This is the last image I am left with.

Final messages

After this meeting with Hesse, Jung was a visiting professor. He was already very ill, and this was also the last visit I made to him. I received the news of his death in New Delhi. Deeply moved, Hermann Hesse wrote the following letter:

"New Delhi, 8 December 1961.

Dear Mr Hesse:

When I went to Lugano, I visited Dr Jung. He received me in his office, by a window overlooking the lake. A special light enveloped him, the light of dusk. He was seated and dressed in a Japanese ceremonial kimono, like a Zen monk or an ancient attendant.

Dr Jung was very tired that day; they had been working intensely on an eighty-page manuscript for an American publication, entitled 'Man and His Myths', which I believe will be published next year.

Something made me feel that it was a farewell. A sweet and profound farewell.

I now constantly think of Dr Jung.

It is the mystery of the 'Hermetic Circle'. Perhaps we met in other lives? Why were you so attentive towards me? Have we walked together before, on other paths? When will we meet again? When? Where?

My departure from India

The Tree

That night, I read Hesse's last poem with my son:

THE RANGER OF A BROKEN TWIG

The broken branch, splinters,

swaying year after year,

the song in the wind;

Leafless, barkless,

Naked, faded, weary

living on too,

dying too.

Its song sounds harsh and insistent;

it sounds arrogant, fear hidden.

Another summer, however,

another long winter.

The Statue of Goldmund

BEFORE LEAVING, my son also visited Jung's grave in Küsnacht. We were coming full circle.

We stayed in Zurich for a few days. There stands the Bodmer family manor house. Elsy Bodmer should already be back in Montagnola, and we decided to visit her before leaving the city, to talk at greater length about our recently deceased friend.

Her house, dating from the late 16th century, is perhaps the oldest still standing in Zurich today. Hans C. Bodmer, the friend from Hesse, enjoyed music, horses and medicine. Stepping through the door of her house is like stepping away from the world of today. It feels like another era, and there is a profound silence.

Mrs Bodmer maintains the house as it was in the past; even the rooms where her children were born remain exactly as they were when they lived there, with the furniture and toys that belonged to them.

The hardwoods exude a scent of memory and history. There are artistic treasures preserved; there are paintings by Botticelli and medieval sculptures.

I go upstairs where Elsy Bodmer shows me into a quiet room. Hesse was there on many occasions.

At the start of our conversation, Elsy Bodmer also tells me:

- There was a special bond between you and Hesse. He had a few new friends, but he didn't receive anyone in his later years; yet you were different... It's curious, isn't it, how we grow old and become so different...

And she falls silent, lost in thought.

- Is Mrs Hesse staying at Montagnola? I ask.

- I think so. I asked my son if he wanted to take over the house in Montagnola, and he agreed to let Mrs Hesse stay. It all depends on her getting used to her new solitude.

- Will there be a Hesse museum, with her books and manuscripts?

- Yes, although it hasn't been decided where yet. Some are thinking of Bern, others of Germany. What do you think? It seems to me that Bern would be a bit far away; the same goes for Lugano.

- I said, 'It is time for Hermann Hesse to return to Germany from his exile.'

As I say this, it seems to me that Hesse is advising me.

I also remember the young German couple standing by his grave.

Elsy Bodmer says:

- I think you're right. There's evidence that Hesse wanted to. When asked about it once, he referred to the German town where the Rilke museum is located.

- Moreover, she continues, Hermann Hesse is profoundly German; a cultivator of the last romantic line of Hölderlin.

Like the most distinguished Germans, he connects with the East, with India; Schopenhauer, like Nietzsche and many others. It also seems to me that it was high time for Hesse to return to Germany, to love and revere the beauty he expressed in his mother tongue. The ancient cities of Germany and the roads were sung of by Hesse with exaltation. Nuremberg and his hometown of Calw. Do you remember his beautiful story 'Knulp'? The other day in Montagnola, I witnessed a scene that moved me deeply and I want to tell you about it.

I recounted the scene to Mrs Bodmer about the young Germans.

- I'll tell Mrs Hesse about it, put forward your opinion so she can decide on the museum's location. By the way, did the master visit the Thomas Mann Museum here in Zurich? It's very interesting.

- No, I haven't seen it, but I'd love to. Wasn't the Mann Museum in Germany?

- You know that Thomas Mann condemned Germany collectively, without distinction, during the last war. And he did not forgive the Germans, making that clear when he visited the country after the disaster... Hesse left Germany, but he never condemned it on a global scale...

- I think Thomas Mann, despite his total condemnation of Germany, always remained a German; that is to say, he lost his sense of proportion... Germany is like Spain, absolutely...

Mrs Bodmer gently lowers her eyelids.

Pour me some old wine, then, in a beautiful crystal glass.

The midday light filters through the painted wooden shutters. I rise to leave, but she stops me, eager to show me some Renaissance paintings and an icon with Latin inscriptions in a neighbouring room.

In one corner is a figure that absorbs my full attention. It is a life-size statue of a monk. Elsy Bodmer explains to me that it is a twelfth-century work.

I stand motionless, gazing at this extraordinary sculpture. The young monk, with a shaved head, barefoot, clad only in a simple habit, holds a rosary in his left hand to his heart, whilst his right hand makes the sign of the cross. The hands and feet are exquisite, and the entire figure is delicate and imbued with spirituality. His eyes cast a gaze that hails from the dawn of Christianity, those centuries in which light mingled with shadow to elevate the sublime corner of Creation.

Goldmund, Hesse's hero, a wanderer on the roads of medieval Europe, created a single work in his lifetime, a unique work of art, yet one born of such abundant love: a wooden sculpture on a church pulpit. And I believe that sculpture might well have been the product of a lifetime, embodying all the light and all the darkness of his life.

It was recently decided to close the Hermann Hesse Museum in Germany, in the town of Marbach, on the banks of the River Necker, the Schiller National Museum, which also houses the archives of many other distinguished German writers, including Rilke. Hermann Hesse's archives were donated to the Swiss government and are now held in Germany. The decision was taken by Ninon Hesse.

The Dream

That night, in Zurich, he had a dream. He saw a large, white, multi-storey building, which looked like a university. Numerous students were studying there; every room was a classroom. They studied there, primarily the exact and applied sciences, engineering, and physics. Every student in that countless army would soon be a scientist or an engineer, applying that marvellous knowledge automatically, so to speak— —without marvelling at it, nor extending the idea to the question, without drawing vital conclusions, without grasping the essence.

It was the world of the present and the future. Men emerging from these classes would be hard, hard, governed by the laws of mechanics, mechanical products in their own right. The last exponents of a world's soul, a solar age, of flesh and spirit, the last representatives of the classical gods and demons, of the living earth, wine and blood, had vanished. It had just died. The demigods, living men, the last heroic sons of dreams and magic. They would be judged by the ant-men of this society—as romantic as they were idealistic, the superstructure of bourgeois society in the throes of decay. The archetype of this would be the men—ashes of the atom, the machine, the physical conquest of space—so furiously preparing them with concrete and asphalt in these countries. And it would get worse, worse and worse. What was I doing there? He asked. Where was my place, my domain? A stranger, a foreigner, there was not a single hole, a single space for me. And Hesse and Jung, where had they gone? Too far away, beyond reach. They would never return; they would go to other worlds, to other universes earned through the work they had done in their souls. And could I do that? Prepare me too, that I may strive never to return to this earth and earn my place on the path to another sphere. I had very little time for that; I must make one last effort. I must act now, without delay, if I wished to save myself from the leaden desert on earth that would be transformed by mechanics, the horrible prison, and proceed in the same way as my great friends, my friends, demigods of flesh and blood, the magicians, the guardians of the dream.

The Bremgarten Festival

Today is Sunday. I find myself alone in my home in Belgrade and intend to enter into a ritual, surrounded by my paintings and sculptures from the East. I shall listen to the magical music that Hesse

loved and that I loved listening to with him; I lend you my senses so that you may continue to hear it. I am sure you will listen.

I light a stick of Indian sandalwood and put on Bach's Mass in B minor on the gramophone. I lie back on the sofa and let the music envelop us. I won't miss a single note; indeed, that wouldn't be possible, for it is seen through me and I must be faithful to it; I hear it as he did whilst he was alive. Oh yes, this piece is like Leonardo's paintings: 'The Annunciation', 'Saint John', 'Saint Anne and the Virgin', like the 'Virgin of the Rocks'. In this Mass, Bach re-enacts his own life, offering up his motifs, his symbols, his legends; this is something that transcends even his own soul. It is a mass to himself. It is a sacrifice of his own life, his soul, searching, delving upwards, and in which the final chord is a marriage and an offering bordering on sacrilege. It is death and the hope of resurrection, but the myths themselves, the stories created in taverns, in gardens, the number of parts, as a counterpoint, the immaterialised voices and the floriculture of it all, the mystical flower that springs from the Altar, which is the imaginary product of the controlled exaltation of the soul that wept from the cradle to the grave: 'My Father, why have you forsaken me?" This is the magic: the creation of the Mystic Flower. Only very few have succeeded. Bach in his Mass. The Mass is also the festival of Bremgarten that Bach offered up to himself, repeating the creator's entire existence.

I keep listening. I miss nothing. And Hesse is with me and thanks me. Listen to me, teach me to listen to music.

The Mass ended and was followed by the 'St John Passion' and the 'St Matthew Passion'. All day long, all week until next Sunday. And in the final ritual, which has already been completed, the will on our part, Bremgarten, mine.

In fact, I prepared lunch in the lonely house in Belgrade; the country struggles to overcome the sun and the ear. And I am inviting my ghosts and my dead myths to lunch.

It will be a lunch in honour of my departed friend. Then I shall return Montagnola's hospitality. And I shall also invite my legends.

I lead my guests into the dining room and am seating them at the table whilst magical music plays in the background. Everyone sits in such a way that they form a mandala.

At first, the gathering was in honour of Hesse, but gradually it became a mass celebrated in my own soul, with the dream of a lifetime. Next, I served red wine from Istria and the Andes. And I raised a toast to Hesse, so that the path beyond the grave might be smooth. I promised, moreover, to keep him in my memory against the fearful waters of the Rio Grande and offered a toast to each of my ghosts and all my great dreams.

Toast, toast again, whilst the chorus of witches sang. And wrapped up, they moved to the rhythm of the faces of legend, friends beyond space and time.

Excerpts from two letters

"Belgrade, 6 October 1962.

Dear Mrs Hesse:

I have been listening these days to the Mass and Bach's Passions according to St John and St Matthew. All the while I had the impression that Hermann Hesse was listening to them with me. I lent him my ear so that I might simply enjoy the voices of this great prayer.

Do the same, madam, lend in your own way, live happily, for that is what a lady needs. Observe the ritual. It is an act in which we must be the celebrants, nurturing and perfecting our dearest friends, for those who have already crossed over to the other side and sometimes do not seem to be giving any signs... "

" Montagnola, 21 October 1962.

Dear Mr Serrano:

. . . I am sure that Hermann Hesse would be happy to know that you have heard the Mass in B minor, as it was his great passion. It was about this work that he wrote his letter in May of that same year.

. . . Do not forget Hermann Hesse. Everything is forgotten so easily!

It fills me with joy to know how much he loved you and how much he still loves you...

Ninon Hesse

Antarctica

In 1947, I went to Antarctica. This journey, both inward and outward, to the world's glaciers, at their very edge, in search of a mysterious oasis of warm waters, was recounted by me in *Who Calls in the Ice* . . . What I did not mention here, however, is a book that sparked my interest in that adventure: *The Self and the Unconscious* by Carl Gustav Jung. I had to struggle with this work at first, because it had gripped me, causing me to forget the silhouette of the glaciers that had engulfed me.

Only in the end did I come to understand that the book and the adventure set in the Old South must have a connection, an analogous meaning.

This was my first serious encounter with Professor Jung's work. I had read Freud and Adler, and Jung, but had never delved deeply into them. A brief encounter with his 'Psychological Types' was all I had experienced up to that point.

And now, as I walked through the channels of Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego, under a persistent rain, whilst admiring the lights of the Última Esperanza range, the storms and the Beagle crossed the purgatory of the Drake Passage to finally fall upon the white-snowed fire, there, beside the throne of icebergs shedding the gigantic obstacles of Antarctica, lost on the ice plains, frozen by the cold, in the frantic search for the legendary Oasis, Professor Jung's book has been with me in the pocket of my parka, and my thoughts often turned to his puzzles, diverting my attention from the great crevasses of the frozen plain, and also in search of the key that might open another fissure in the soul of modern man, separating the self from the unconscious.

What, in fact, aroused in me such a keen interest in this man and his work? Reflecting now, I believe it was the encounter with the idea of the archetype and the passing mention that there might be a possibility that Jesus himself had been a prisoner of those tremendous autonomous forces. An incredible world was revealed to me, like the terrifying frozen extremes and white silence of Antarctica, like the shroud covering its abysses. Constellations of ideas, foreseen though not yet realised, blew into my consciousness.

On my return from Antarctica, it was difficult to know what was more important to me: the expedition or reading Jung's work.

However, I did not have time for another book by the same author. The external shot of ice was repeated within me, urging me to go to extremes. This anxious quest gave rise to the desire to discover India as a means of finding the sources, the roots, in search of the origin of the myths and legends of our America, and also to have direct contact with the teachings of yoga—this science that had been known in Chile.

The need to translate ancient wisdom into rational language, in an attempt to make it more accessible to myself, led me to Jung. I reread *The Self and the Unconscious*, and then moved on to his commentaries on books about Chinese and Tibetan yoga: *The Secret of the Golden Flower*, published in collaboration with Richard Wilhelm; *The I Ching*; *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*; and *The Book of Great Liberation*, edited by Evans-Wentz. I have also read his work * * on alchemy, his study of the

Rosarium Philosophorum, attributed to Petrus Toletanus; *Psychology and Religion*, *Aion*, *Symbols of Transformation*, and others. Libido, which for Freud was synonymous with sex, took on a certain resemblance to the 'Kundalini' of Tantric yoga with Jung.

It is also believed that in 'Analytical Psychology', or 'depth psychology', one can perceive in Jung a resemblance to a path of initiation, underlying, like a second language, of which the 'author' may well not possess perfect awareness. The psychoanalyst was now the 'guru', the Master, and the patient, the disciple, was 'complete'. If we assume that all illness is in reality a division, an incompleteness, and that all health is an encounter with wholeness, or a new momentary equilibrium, Jung's approach also led in this case to the ultimate reality of Purusha or the Self, the centre of this ideal person.

But Jung wished to distinguish himself from Hinduism and the East in general, with the intention of establishing a dialogue without fusion with the A, avoiding the annihilation of the persona, unless the ego loses its identity.

My research in India has led me to finally understand that in that country too, in the distant past, there had been some extraordinary individuals known as Siddhas, who were magicians and alchemists, legendary inhabitants of pre-Aryan India, who are thought to have engaged in that dialogue separately, so to speak, and who opposed the profound bliss of the 'samadhi' of the absolute Vedantists of the Aryan era: 'Kaivalya', meaning 'far', 'separate', the part of the universe, Prakriti, from Brahma, God himself.

The Siddhas aspired to attain immortality in the body through a combination of metals.

My first meeting with Dr Jung

In December 1957, I wrote a letter to Dr Jung regarding an article of mine in The Hindustan Times, entitled 'The Crucifixion of the Ego', inspired by the words of a speech that the then Vice-President of India, the philosopher Sarvapali Radhakrishnan, delivered at the World Congress of Religions, held in Delhi. In that article, I made no reference to Jung.

I received no direct reply to my letter, save through his secretary, Aniela Jaffe. She informed me that Dr Jung had read the article but, being in poor health at the time and overworked, he thanked me for it.

At that time, in India, the days passed like great birds with heavy wings. I sat on the edge of time there and watched it slip away—the rotten wood, broken dreams, loves, unfulfilled desires. From time to time, I settled into the lotus position and practised the yoga of concentration. I murmured the sacred syllable 'om'.

It was also the time of the Queen of Sheba's visits. To use Jung's terminology, I would say that these were the years of my life's struggle with the anima. It was during these days that I wrote the story entitled 'The Visits of the Queen of Sheba'. I did not know that this story would be the first link in a chain of other works, a great shock, and that it would soon become a published book bearing the same title and with a foreword by Jung.

On my first visit to Dr Jung, I gave him that story, in which symbols of East and West were interwoven; it is known for its connection to him, but it also synthesises the 'legends' of my life.

It would be ungrateful not to recall the key role that India played in my meeting and subsequent friendship with Dr Jung. Without India, there might not have been the possibility of such a powerful attraction for the great man, for we know the importance that the country held for Jung, as had previously been the case with Hesse.

It was Mrs Indira Gandhi, Nehru's daughter, who introduced me to Dorothy Norman, an intelligent American woman interested in Jung and his work with symbols. Mrs Norman telegraphed Dr Jacobi, Jung's disciple in Zurich, and told her of my wish to be received by the professor and of my forthcoming visit to that city. She asked her to help me secure an interview.

Although, at that time, it was not easy to approach Jung, even for Dr Jacobi, as he was living in complete seclusion, it was she who revealed his whereabouts to me. Dr Jung was on holiday in Locarno.

To get to Hermann Hesse's house in Montagnola, one must pass through Locarno. I tried to visit Jung as well.

And so, on the afternoon of 28 February 1959, I found myself in the grand hall of the Hotel Splanade in Locarno, waiting for Dr Jung, who had agreed to see me.

I saw him as he slowly descended the stairs. He was tall, with slightly stooped shoulders. His hair was white; he was thin in those days and I think he was holding a pipe in his hand. He greeted me kindly, inviting me to sit in a corner by a railing where we were completely secluded.

'Are you from India?' he asked me in English. 'I was there some time ago; I tried to convince the Hindus of the impossibility of completely annihilating the ego, the consciousness, the "samadhi" of depth.'

Jung thus got straight to the point. His gestures and words were measured, elegant, yet full of enthusiasm contained within an inner fervour that one could sense stirring within him—a life of constant thought, hour by hour, in a man who was at that time around eighty-four years old.

And he continued:

- In Bengal, at the University of Calcutta, I had discussions with professors and learned Brahmins on the same subject, but they did not understand it. I tried to explain to them that if Ramakrishna, for example, had his consciousness completely nullified in the depths of his ecstasy, there would have been nothing in him to engage with them, to know them and appreciate them even more; nothing would have come from them, he would not have been able to remember anything.

During the conversation, I realised that I remained fully aware that I was in the presence of the great genius whom we had admired the previous year.

Striving to maximise my mental clarity and concentration, I observed him attentively. Although elderly, a powerful energy emanated from him as he spoke, as well as kindness, coupled with a certain irony, or perhaps sarcasm. All of this was shrouded in an air of detachment and mystery. It was thought that this good man could become a cruel and destructive ' ', if the individual so wished, through a sort of fusion of extremes or by eliminating polarities. His eyes gazed, penetrating beyond objects and, it seemed, beyond time. He had an aquiline nose. I had seen photographs of Jung in his youth and adulthood; I was already struck by the transformation in his appearance, as I could find no point of contact between the pictures and the face before me. Was this a transformation akin to that of Aurobindo Ghose into Old Aurobindo at the 'Ashram' in Pondicherry? The face I was now looking at was that of an old 17th-century alchemist, revealing a striking asymmetry. His hands were twisted, like Hesse's. The third finger of his left hand stood out, a dark stone set in gold, which drew my attention powerfully. His drawings must have had a meaning I could not fathom.

As he seemed to have easily created a warm and pleasant atmosphere between us, our first meeting went on much longer than expected. By the end of the visit, I had the impression more of a first encounter than a reunion. It was as if I had come into the presence of someone who was waiting for me and whom I had met before. We exchanged our impressions of pilgrimages.

I heard him say:

- 'Unconscious' means unconsciousness. No one can fully penetrate it whilst alive, nor can they remember it afterwards, just as the Hindus do. To remember, one needs a 'viewer', the consciousness of the ego. I discussed the matter with Guru Maharaja of Mysore...

He pauses again and taps his pipe on the balustrade.

- The Hindu seeks to set aside the ego's discourse, never to return here, to the wheel of samsara; fears of eternity, like insomnia, seek to merge everything. But it was not always so, and there were also some who aspired to the opposite: the Siddhas. I understand that you wish to establish a dialogue between the self and that which transcends it, projecting the light of consciousness ever further into the unconscious... Well then, the Lord speaks of the collective unconscious; in accordance with the law of polarity, there must also be a collective conscious and perhaps even a Superconscious. Is this not what the Hindus refer to and aspire to elevate us to Samadhi and, in particular, to the Kaivalyas? To achieve Superconsciousness, one would have to abort the small, rational, everyday consciousness... Could there be a misunderstanding regarding what the Hindu means when speaking of nullifying the ego-consciousness?

- It is possible, says Jung, and this is due to the weakness of the Hindu exposition; they do not even set these things out rationally, but in the form of a sermon on a parable. There is no interest in definition, in impressing the reason of one's interlocutor. This is an intrinsic condition of the East in general... As for the hypothesis of a superconsciousness, it belongs to the realm of metaphysics, and lies outside my field. I wish to proceed on the basis of facts and experiences. And I have found the unconscious to be a stable and permanent centre; I have not found it so far, and I do not believe it exists. . . What we call the 'I' is an ideal centre, equidistant from the ego and the unconscious, which amounts, in a certain sense, to the maximum and natural expression of individuality, its complement or supplement, its totality. Nature yearns to express itself, exhausting its possibilities. Man does too. The self is the possibility of fulfilment, of wholeness. It is therefore an ideal centre, a creation, nature's dream. The Hindus are wise, no matter what. The Sankhya philosophers speak of the self as Purusha. Likewise, the Atman is. And the definition the Hindus give it fits perfectly.

It is clear that this definition is a parable. Do you know the story of the disciple who went to visit the master to ask him what the Atman was? The Master replied:

"That is all."

- In that case, is the elephant the Maharaja?

- Yes,' said the Master. 'The Atman is the elephant, and the elephant is also the Maharaja.'

The disciple left very happy. On his way, he met the Maharaja, the elephant. He did not stray from the path, thinking: 'If I am the Atman and the elephant is too, he will recognise me.' Just as the elephant's handler shouted at him to move away, he did not hear, so the elephant struck him with its trunk, hurling him several metres away. The next day, he sought out the master and said:

'You said that the elephant and I were Atman, and look what it did.'

The Master, without losing his composure, asked him:

'And who said that, the elephant's handler?'

'The one who told you to step out of the way.'

'You should have followed his advice,' said the Master, 'because the elephant's handler is also the Atman...'

- Ah, the Hindus have answers for everything. They know so much!

And Jung laughed heartily, with joy.

- 'They live through symbols,' I said; 'they are imbued with them, they are permeated by them, but they cannot interpret or appreciate them when someone else does, because that somehow destroys them...' You interpret the symbols... it doesn't surprise me, because your work is not more widely known and discussed in India, despite your great devotion to Hindu culture and the East in general... In my country, you are well known and widely read.

- Yes, I constantly receive correspondence from Chile and other Latin American countries, which surprises me, since my work, my labour and my efforts are directed above all towards myself; they are marks left within a process of individuation, yet, even though it is linked by hermetic bonds to the past and the future; and not being destined for success or mass popularity, it surprises me that I have suddenly become successful in that country. I fear that is not a good thing. Essential work is done in silence and bears fruit only in the minds of a few. There is a Chinese proverb that says: 'If a man sits alone in his room forming correct thoughts, they will be heard a thousand kilometres away...'

He paused for a moment and continued:

- Yes, India is extraordinarily interesting and one must live this experience fully, intensely, until the time comes... I also wanted to experience the universe as a product of the West, to test our ways and bring life into the areas corresponding to those experienced by the Hindus, bringing them into my consciousness through contact with a different world. That is why I travelled to India in 1938. I shall try to explain how I see this country and I shall tell you whether I am right or not. A Hindu, as a Hindu, does not think; at least, he does not think in the sense of the ' ' act of thinking. The Hindu, on the other hand, is aware of thought. The Hindu seems, in a primitive sense, to be so. I do not say that he is primitive, but that the process of his thinking reminds me of primitive forms of thought production. Primitive reasoning is essentially an unconscious function and only accounts for its results. We should expect this peculiarity from a civilisation that has enjoyed practically uninterrupted continuity since the earliest ages. Our natural evolution was suddenly interrupted at its primitive level by an invasion of a psychology and spirituality stemming from a higher level of civilisation. We were interrupted at the onset of a barbaric polytheism, though nipped in the bud or eliminated over the centuries, and not so long ago. I suppose that this particular deviation has taken root in the Western mind. Our existence has become something that has not been fully realised and may never be so completely. Thus, a dissociation arose in Western man between the conscious and unconscious parts of his mind. Undoubtedly, the conscious mind was able to give free rein to the burden of irrationality and instinctive individuality at the expense of the total impulses. Man was divided between the conscious and the unconscious personality. The conscious personality could be tamed because it was separated from primitive man. So it could be highly disciplined, organised and rational in a one-sided way, but the other side remained suppressed, save for the primitive acts of education and civilisation. This explains our relapses into the most atrocious barbarism, and this explains the terrible fact that the higher we go in our science and technology, the more dangerous and diabolical are the ways in which we misuse our inventions and progress... This, however, is not the only way to ensure that man is civilised: at least it is not the ideal situation. It would be possible to consider another, more satisfactory possibility. Instead of focusing exclusively on one part of man, we could try to consider the whole of man. We could avoid this fatal dissociation between an upper half and a lower half by consciously uniting man with the weight of his primitive earthly sphere. In India we find the example of a civilisation that incorporates all essential primitivism, encompassing the whole of man, from the highest to the lowest. Hindu civilisation and psychology resemble its temples: they represent the Universe. I say this in order to explain what I mean by 'not thinking'.

I should simply say, thank God there is a man who has not learnt to think, and yet brings his thoughts or visions to life, as if they were living beings, who perceives his gods in the form of visible thoughts, based on the reality of instincts. He has rescued his gods, and they live with this man. It is true that this is a natural life, full of surprises, rusticity, misery, sickness and death; yet, in a certain sense, it is complete, satisfying and of unfathomable emotional beauty. Undoubtedly, his logic is flawed, and it is surprising to see how fragments of Western science coexist peacefully alongside what we call superstitions. But in India, such intolerable contradictions matter little. If these contradictions exist, they are peculiarities of autonomous thought and are the sole responsibility of those who hold them. Man is not responsible for these contradictions, since thought is seen in this way. The Hindu is not interested in the endless details of the Universe. His ambition is to have a vision of the whole. He does not yet know that the existential world can be destroyed between two concepts...

Professor Jung leaned back in his chair, staring intently at a distant point, perhaps the Indian man and his images.

'That is how it is,' he said. 'India resembles a great natural civilisation, a civilisation of nature. The East as a whole, at least until recently, did not wish to dominate nature, but rather to respect its laws, to understand them, to give them meaning. In this way, human life too is full of meaning.' Undoubtedly, it is less 'person' and more 'archetype'. Of course, being a person does not necessarily mean a well; it can be quite the opposite...

- Yes, India is an archetype, as Jung confirmed. So I tried not to visit Swamis and Gurus there; I did not visit Ramana Maharishi, who inspired Somerset Maugham, because I thought it would do me no good...

The Magical Wedding

With Dr Jacobi

BEFORE LEAVING Zurich, I wanted to thank Dr Jacobi for showing me the way forward. I went to visit her at her flat.

She asked me curiously about my interviews with Jung. She was interested to know if he had said anything about the world situation.

'Jung fears a war or a catastrophe,' she told me, 'as he did in 1964, due to astrological changes, the transition from one era to another. The coming of Christ coincides with the end of one eon and the beginning of another.'

'Jung didn't say anything to me about that,' I said.

- Jung is also intrigued by the arrival of beings from other planets, which would correspond to the collective visions of 'flying saucers'. Human beings would undergo a great transformation...

- Jung didn't mention any of this, I insisted. We spoke of the chakras. He told me something very interesting: the chakras are centres of consciousness, and Kundalini is the emotional current that unites them.

- No, the chakras are energy centres, and Kundalini Yoga—Kundalini—is the development of psychic energy...

- We also talked about dream interpretation and explained that analysing them increases my vitality.

- That makes sense, because then an energy is incorporated that would otherwise be lost. But it is very difficult for anyone to analyse their own dreams.

- I would be very interested to hear your opinion on archetypes, Dr Jacobi.

- They are something akin to the structure of the psyche, a certain impulse, the manifestation of an instinct. In reality, we do not know where they originate.

- Is there something that acts as the counterpart to the collective unconscious?

- On the collective level, Europe and America constitute the Collective Consciousness, with their social laws and codes. International law is this collective consciousness that seeks balance and polarises the peoples of Africa and Asia, who are in turmoil, rising to the surface. One side of the brain is civilised, the rational one. And the other, the barbaric one... On the one hand, the desire to rule the earth and even to escape from it. More and more men aspire to such an escape... The aviator is the quintessential feminine man. There will be fewer and fewer men on earth and more aviators...

Over glasses of vermouth, we then spoke of India. He saw the country solely through the desire to annihilate the ego and lose oneself, and he contrasts Atman, the Vedic concept, with Jung's psychology, with the intention of establishing a dialogue between man and his personal God, between the ego and the self.

‘That doesn’t mean God doesn’t exist,’ he says. Jung wants to broaden the radius of consciousness, extending his beam of light into the sea of darkness, thus completing the work of creation, finishing what nature left incomplete... In the West, people don’t want to be God, as in India; the Christian mystic is united with God, but the next day he has his breakfast. His existence is simple; he lives the faith, the product of Faith

Dr Jacobi then says that he does not like India. At that time he was sixty-nine years old. We also spoke of Wilhelm and Count Keyserling. Finally, he told me some stories and recounted some conversations:

- He was an exceptional man. When this happened, it was impossible to speak of anyone else; he was driven by a volcano within him. He often sat here where he is now.

On leaving Zurich, Jung wrote to him, thanking him. He said:

"My meetings with you in Switzerland over the past few days were deeply meaningful to me; they were imbued with a mysterious light and the fleeting beauty of spring. It was a magical atmosphere, and I dare say that our conversation at your home in Küsnacht, which centred on love, will remain forever in my memory. Your words, which followed the path and were rediscovered by Lord, can best be understood by poets, and only by some of them; they are very precise, and that is precisely why you are a great and true poet.

Throughout our conversation, the presence of the Queen of Sheba lingered nearby. This queen, whom you recently met—and of whom you surely know the full story. I dare say, dear master, that because our lives intersect in this eternity, the Queen will be favourable to us, beyond life or death.

“In memory of our Queen of Sheba, who may be the same, I send my thanks.”

Dr Jung writes in the Preface

"The Visits of the Queen of Sheba"

Dr Jung gave me the impetus and, back in India, gave me all the time I needed to continue my stories of the Queen of Sheba. They were taking shape, creating themselves almost of their own accord; they made me their prisoner. It seems to me that someone is using me; thank you, , on my behalf. ‘Someone caught me in their nets’; most likely in the sea of the Collective Unconscious, or whatever that means. I felt propelled by a motor more powerful than the mighty monsoon winds; and on the warm nights of India, perfumed by ratkirani, this deadly jasmine, with outstretched arms, sometimes playing a very old flute, an antiquity, hailing from Ur of the Chaldeans, or the legendary Iskandaria, in the steppes of Central Asia, seeking to recreate in the flesh a mythological soul, a kind of dream. However, in the end, what emerged was a bleeding foot from the edge of a wound, a cross, a flower on the Cross.

After the manuscript had been translated into English, he sent it to Professor Jung in Küsnacht, accompanied by the following letter:

"Delhi, 26 November 1959.

Dear Dr Jung:

I am sure you will be the only person who can fully understand the pages I am referring to. In a way, these pages were inspired by you, as they began with the story of ‘The Visits of the Queen of Sheba’, which I gave you with a dedication in Locarno last February. Your understanding allowed me to continue working on the stories contained herein. I am sending you the manuscript before publishing it in India. My only concern is that you find the time to read it.

With my warmest regards.

The reply took nearly two months to arrive. It read:

"Kusnacht, 14 January 1960.

Dear Mr Serrano:

Please forgive my long silence. Advanced age reduces the time available for activity, and I had to wait for the right moment to get away from the city and into the peace and tranquillity of the countryside, where I could write a letter without being disturbed.

Your work is extraordinary. It is like a dream within a dream. Very poetic, I would say, and very different from the products of the unconscious to which I am accustomed, although certain archetypal figures are clearly indicated. The poetic genius transforms primordial material into almost musical forms, just as, at the other extreme, Schopenhauer understands music as a movement of archetypal ideas. The main factor seems to be a driving force and a strong aesthetic tendency. As a result, the reader is drawn into a growing dream, into a space that expands ever further and an unfathomable depth of time. The rational element does not play a major role, though it lies in a hazy background, very much alive in the richness of the vivid imagery.

The unconscious – or what we designate by that name – presents itself to the author in its poetic aspect, though I know that above all in its scientific or philosophical aspect, or perhaps more precisely in its religious aspect. The unconscious is undoubtedly the Panmeter, the Mother of all (that is, of all psychic life); it is the mother, the background, the foundation of all the differentiated phenomena we call psychic: religion, science, philosophy, art. Its experience—in whatever form—is the focus of the whole; it is precisely this experience that has been absent from our modern civilisation. It is the avenue and the royal road to Mundus Unus.

With my best wishes for a happy New Year.

Yours affectionately,

C. G. Jung" 1

In that letter, I would particularly like to highlight the paragraph in which Jung defines himself by stating that the unconscious, 'or what is called by that name', presents itself most clearly to him in the religious sphere.

I showed this letter to several friends, who thought that Jung should be asked for permission to use it as a preface to my book. I resisted this advice; I did not wish to trouble the professor. On the other hand, he told me: 'In the shadow of this great tree, small plants cannot grow; is it not so, moreover, that one makes use of the help…

I walk alone, just as he did…'

1. All of Professor Jung's letters are published with the family's permission. In short, the edition of 'Adler' in Jung's correspondence with England also includes the letters reproduced here.

At that time, the British historian Arnold Toynbee was visiting Delhi, and he had lunch at my house one day. When we spoke of Jung, he told me to read his work, as he had decided to seek a mythical explanation for the birth of civilisation in the world. That settled it for me, and although Toynbee had his doubts, when I showed him Jung's letter and asked for his opinion on the preface, he wrote to Professor Jung again asking for his permission. The reply was immediate, as if he had indeed been awaiting my request and had deliberately written this letter to serve as an introduction.

This was his reply:

"Kusnacht, 16 June 1960.

Dear Mr Serrano:

Thank you for your letter. And I feel keen remorse for not having found the time and the necessary peace of mind to reply to your other important letter, which I received some time ago. In such cases, the need for Kairos—the precise moment when it is possible for me to give you the correct reply—has, of late, however, been interrupted by many things, above all by untimely visitors, and a propitious occasion to write has not yet presented itself; but I have kept the letter addressed to me with the firm intention of replying to it as soon as I can, and you may be certain of this reply.1

With regard to your request, I am happy to say that I would very much appreciate seeing my letter included in your book. Allow me to draw your attention to a typographical error: the Greek name of the Mother of All is spelled correctly and not Pammeter Panmeter.

I was informed, with great regret, that you had an accident, parallel, one might say, to the terrible disaster that devastated your country. I have read with horror of the massive destruction and the many people who lost their lives. It seems that Mother Earth is going through a situation as difficult as that of humanity, although the scientific mind does not sympathise with this coincidence.2

1 My other letter, and the reply to which Dr Jung refers, are reproduced later in a separate chapter.

2 Jung referred to the astonishing earthquakes that then devastated southern Chile. Jung replied to the doctor:

"I am certain there must be a profound connection between Mother Earth and the human mind. Sometimes I think of the Earth as a great body, and man as something like the cells located in different parts of this great body. I thought of this when you wrote to me that my accident is a parallel to the terrible catastrophe occurring in my country, indeed.

The fantastic beauty of Chile's landscape, its mountains and lakes, and the extraordinary clarity of its climate around the volcanoes, recalls the beauty of a living soul on the edge, or the halo surrounding a girl suffering from tuberculosis who is bound to die. Yes, Chile is an extraordinary point on the body of Mother Earth, and my being is united with that country. In fact, I am a man from the southern hemisphere...' (Excerpts from the letter to Jung dated 27 June 1960).

I didn't even take a summer holiday. I am still mourning, trying to find my way through a wave of work.

With my best wishes for your speedy recovery.

Yours most affectionately,

C. G. Jung".

This is the story of my collaboration with Dr Jung on a work of poetry and symbols. I believe that never before in his long life did he write a preface to a purely literary work. His prefaces were always for scientific or research works, such as translations of the 'I Ching' and 'The Golden Flower' by Wilhelm, or the Tibetan 'Book of the Dead' and 'The Book of Great Liberation'.

And now I wonder: why did Jung give me this unconditionally? Wait a moment... Or was it perhaps the Hermetic Circle, the Golden Chain, which is timeless...

When the first copy of my book was published, Jung sent it to me with the following dedication:

"If I could cast doubt on the intervention of occult forces in the world, the fact that I am presented with a preface to 'The Visits...' is proof of the existence of these forces and also another visit to the unknown and the mystery in which we are united – though perhaps we already were – by the will of a person who is also unknown, but who knows us.

With gratitude and admiration.

Delhi, Sunday 21 August 1960."

Arnold Toynbee

As I mentioned at the time, the historian Arnold Toynbee was visiting India. He delivered several lectures in New Delhi, invited by the 'Indian Council for Cultural Relations', and a seminar in memory of Maulana Azad.

Toynbee spoke of the need for a universal religion, a kind of syncretism in which all the religious groups in the world coexist side by side.

In our conversations, Toynbee told me that he had taken part in the celebrations for Jung's birthday in Zurich, at which time he had delivered a speech on the radio. Toynbee had not yet met the master.

As you know, Toynbee was concerned by the fact that, although man has existed on the planet for over a million years, civilisation only began around five thousand years ago. Why? What made this possible? Why not sooner? Jung's archetype hypothesis and Toynbee's universal myth provided the starting point.

He explained:

- Perhaps some chieftain had a dream that took hold of him. He was possessed by a myth, by an archetype, by a vision, and his awe was transmitted to the whole community.

Therefore, according to Toynbee, religion would be the driving force of history. In fact, it is evolving in its manifestations or appearances of eternal images; however, even though the outer, visible layer of history repeats itself, according to Spengler. Today, the conditions established by super-technical automatism, of which Toynbee is a proponent, make possible a kind of universal religion, he said.

In all this, however, I believe there is an explanation that is too rational and, to some extent, somewhat simplistic.

Toynbee asked me about his idea of the archetype. He told me:

- Jung's archetype is very different from the Platonic idea. It is a natural phenomenon, something attributed to nature… But there is something I could never understand about Jung: his hypothesis of timing. What is time?

We then spoke of the historical moment, Asia and Europe. Toynbee had also visited several countries in South America, where he was interested in pre-Columbian civilisations.

- I think I said that the West is moving towards a rediscovery of the values of the soul, just as the East is experiencing the allure of a purely technical and outward-looking civilisation.

I referred to the white man's chances of survival in the face of the immense ocean of people of colour.

- The white man was diving like a swimmer before the monstrous wave, seeking the other side. Silence must now intervene for the people of colour. In the meantime, , by tightening the circle, we must strengthen the chain to preserve a possible legacy. Only in this way can we appease the just vengeance of the enraged ocean, taking a moment to apply a balm to the wounds of the races that remain alive,

having been dominated in the past. He alone preserves his legacy by rediscovering myth and legend. External action is completely unnecessary when the mind is like a radio that transmits and receives, even though it is in the most complete solitude, in absolute solitude. Nothing is lost. The true path is the work of magic towards individual perfection. In today's world of the masses, strong individuals are needed more than ever—those who polarise and balance tensions... I believe that the East and India have exhausted the path of introversion; yoga, meditation and concentration no longer yield results, and this is because the world's collective unconscious seems to have exhausted that path. The Middle Way turns outwards, and swami yoga, the holy men of the East, have remained in this position for so long that they have become set in their ways within stereotypical norms that no longer affect their deepest fibres. The sight of a camera arouses greater enthusiasm and sets in motion psychological forces more powerful than the fleshly appearance of the god Vishnu... On the path of ancient magical compensation, its archaic technique exerts a white sorcerer's power over the exhausted man, affecting him and capable of transforming his life... The pendulum swung...

So that afternoon I spoke to Professor Toynbee. He listened in silence, with extraordinary kindness emanating from his person, whilst his white-haired silhouette stood out at dusk against the clear summer sky of India. Unsure whether he shared my thoughts; in reality, I let them flow freely without feeling responsible for them, following somewhat the Hindu technique of thought that Jung had explained to me.

I went through a book with Toynbee that Jung had written analysing the problems of today's world, *The Undiscovered Self*, and read some of its pages beneath the mango trees.

"Delhi, 24 February 1960.

Dear Dr Jung:

I had lunch yesterday with Professor Arnold Toynbee and he told me that he was recently in Switzerland for his birthday. I regret not having been informed in time to send you my congratulations. Please accept them now, albeit belatedly.

I am currently reading your book *The Undiscovered Self*.

I spoke of it with Toynbee, who gave a couple of interesting lectures here on 'Universal Civilisation' and 'One World Religion', etc. Following your ideas closely, Toynbee said it might be better for the West to step back into the wings and leave others free to act, since the most important task for the Christian world must be to try to preserve individuality, the person, that delicate flower which is in danger of disappearing. I told him that, in contrast to the material and the quantity, it was necessary to create quality. And this can only be done by reviving and revitalising symbols; a solitary task.

I believe that in this way, today, you are the only light. This will become clearer in the future. However, I am not sure. Artists working with symbols today are also striving for something, but unconsciously, in my opinion.

With my warmest regards. "

" Kusnacht, 31 March 1960.

Dear Mr Serrano:

Thank you for your interesting letter, and I fully agree that people in the West who possess the necessary vision and will should concern themselves more with themselves and their own souls than with preaching to the masses or trying to find the best way for them. If they act in this way, it is because they do not know the way themselves. Unfortunately, it is a sad fact that, in general, those who know

nothing about themselves devote themselves to preaching to others, despite the fact that the best example of the 'know' method is education.

Undoubtedly, modern art strives to do its utmost to help man come into contact with a world steeped in obscurantism – but, unfortunately, the artists themselves are unaware of what they are doing.

The very idea that humanity must take a step forward, broadening and affirming human consciousness, seems so difficult that no one understands it; or rather, it is so difficult that no one has the courage to face it. Every step forward in the progress of the psyche has been paid for with blood. I am overcome by sadness and fear when I think of the means of self-destruction being amassed by the world's great powers. At the same time, everyone preaches to everyone else, and no one seems to understand that the need to improve the path begins right within each individual, even though it is a simple truth. Everyone seeks out the organisations and techniques through which they can follow one another, and through which things can be done in the enterprise without danger.

Toynbee would ask: Where is your civilisation and what is its religion? What he says to the masses will be fruitless, it seems to me, unless there comes truth and reality in itself. Mere words have lost their power considerably and become distorted because they have been used for so long.

Hoping you are in good health,

Yours sincerely

C. G. Jung".

My reply to this important letter from Dr Jung was, in turn, quite lengthy, prompting a response of over ten handwritten pages from the great man. Given the date on which he wrote it – a few months before his death – and thanks to the fundamental nature of the matter, which strikes me as something of an ideological testament, I have reproduced both letters in their entirety, with little else added. It was this letter that Jung referred to in his communication of 16 June 1960.

I have Dr Jung's last letter

In September 1960, I had to travel to Chile and, whilst passing through Zurich, I wanted to visit Professor Jung again. Mrs Aniela Jaffe informed me that he was very ill and bedridden, so it would not be possible for me to see him. She had told me this just a few days earlier , whilst working on a reply to my letter, which was still unfinished. However, she advised me to go and see him anyway. Mrs Jaffe undertook to pass on my regards to Dr Jung in his bed. She invited me to tea at her flat in Zurich the following day, when she would hand over the professor's letter to me.

I went back to visit Zurich's old town. I had lunch in a restaurant near the Cathedral, with its monumental clock and a large grove of trees bordering the courtyard. The strength of this tree is like the invincible force of history, and its trunk like a source of energy projected from the bowels of the earth, hardened on contact with the air—the dark force that makes myths return day by day through the ages. Nearby, there was a branch in bloom in spring, yet dry as a desert and homeless in the winter snows.

This hotel is also believed to be the house once inhabited by Goethe. The Dean of the Cathedral, Johann Kaspar Lavater, who died in 1801, was his friend. His grave is located there. Goethe visited the site in 1779 and, with his friend Lavater, walked these streets, perhaps discussing Faust and alchemists. From a very young age, Jung felt a great affinity with Goethe, and there is a family legend about the great poet's possible natural son.

Motionless, gazing at the clock tower, the bar and the playground. It was a moment of solitude; things seemed to stand still in space. No one passed by at that moment. A cat appeared, walking slowly, and slipped beneath the counter. I heard footsteps and soon a man appeared. He was walking along one of the side streets and entered the square; with his presence, the stillness of time grew; his figure seemed

disconnected from the scene and other objects, desperately alone, isolated and without outline—the Cathedral without the square, the world without God.

Then I remembered another of the early scenes, in the East, in the city of Patan, near Kathmandu, Nepal; also a children's playground, on a cold, sunny day. The buildings with curved roofs and spires stood out against the snow-covered backdrop. Golden statues, brightly coloured woodwork, scenes of love carved into the walls; the wide courtyards, temples and streets were strewn with abundant, yellow, sun-drenched grain. Suddenly, a woman dressed in black entered from one of the streets, ending up in the square. Screaming and weeping inconsolably. Her cries pierced the clear morning of that now-lost city.

Now compare this to the scene in the East. That woman, despite her intense mourning, was part of the landscape; she was not merely a ghost of the collective mind, history or legend; yet she was bound to a tradition, the warm soul of myths, the blood of her gods. The scene here, however, in Europe, in Switzerland, in old Zurich, was a desolate spectacle. A man with his hands in his coat pockets, indifferent to everything around him, detached, out of touch with his own surroundings, with the cathedral square. It was the image of abandonment: the individual and his fear of death.

An image cut out with scissors from a morning and midday newspaper that no longer exists, that has gone out of fashion.

Yet, in all this there is an undeniable beauty, profound, delicate, dramatic: the cathedral, the square, the counter, the cat and the man.

It was the beauty, the drama of the person, the ephemeral and his longing for eternity.

That night I met some of Jung's disciples and we consulted the ancient Chinese book of horoscopes, the 'I Ching' or 'Book of Changes', together several times.

As I have already said, this book was revealed by Wilhelm and was incorporated into the living cultural heritage of modern man through the practice of Jung's method, via his discovery of the Law of Correspondence, a hypothesis based on the correspondence between the objective world of reality and the human soul, such that both influence and modify one another. The soul, at certain moments of great tension, exalted love or hatred, influences reality, so to speak, to 'change the course of the stars'.

Jesus said: 'Faith moves mountains.' And Oscar Wilde: 'Nature imitates art.' In the same way, the stars influence destiny, decisions and 'mutations'. In a profound sense, destiny is rooted in the unconscious, for it is the Mother of all, and perhaps the heavens with their constellations are included therein. The ancient Romans, if they stumbled 'unconsciously' on their way out of the house, would turn back and not carry out their duties that day. Jung referred to this in the book entitled The Interpretation of Nature and the Psyche, written in collaboration with the scholar W. Pauli.

The external world is perceived by us through our senses, and what cannot be seen—such as the nucleus of the atom, protons and electrons—was conceived a priori by the mind, or guessed—why not say it?—invented. So reality conforms exactly to what the human mind conceives and posits, including, among other things, the atomic bomb and the explosion, to the point where one might say that an idea is the explosion.

One can never know what reality itself is, since, even with the most complicated mechanical and technical tools, ultimately, what is seen, observed and calculated is by the man who constructed the image and likeness of his ultimate instrument: his earthly mind. One could even say that with opposing arguments, completely contrary to the theory of relativity, one could also arrive at the disintegration of the atom, as demonstrated by the fact that German Horbigerians also produced the atomic bomb. In fact, every theory, every concept is nothing more than a working hypothesis, and ultimate reality will always remain inaccessible. What matters, in any case, both in the sciences and in the other 'different phenomena', is an archetypal reality, belonging to the soul, and which, at a historical moment, or in a specific constellation, imposes itself upon inaccessible reality or creates it, often through opposing means, with different 'working hypotheses' and even without concerning itself with them, accentuating

their mysterious urgencies. The archetype would then encompass the atomic bomb, the disintegration of the atom and the Triad (the number 'three'), which reappears today in communist atheism with Marx, Engels and Lenin, just as with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit; and Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva.

That is why magic never lost its essential power, since it is possible to act upon 'reality' through the existing correspondence with the soul, the law arising from chance, and because, when the soul is under extreme tension, 'passionate', it creates the 'miraculous' conditions for transformation or transfiguration.

Sitting on the floor of a hotel room, we consulted the ancient book. The 'I Ching' should only be opened when the answer has not been found by other means; in extreme cases, so to speak. And that was my situation: I consulted it to see if the time had come for me to leave India.

And the answer from the 'I Ching' was that 'do not linger; you must risk crossing the great waters'.

Once again, the 'Book of Changes' demonstrated its great wisdom. In the event of leaving, to harmonise the soul and energy so that one day I might come to see 'my' Middle now, with the necessary perspective.

Aniela Jaffe is slender, elegant, with a sensitive face and slender hands. We spoke at length. We enjoyed the atmosphere of retreating to her small flat, and she left me almost without thinking. Through the bedroom window one could see the courtyard of a convent. Some nuns were walking by. Aniela Jaffe came to Dr Jung for what Eckermann went to Goethe for. The doctor finished his autobiography, a seminal work, published after his death, which reveals many insights into his thinking.

Out of sincere affection and gratitude for the way that woman had regarded my life as a companion by inviting me to associate with Jung, I helped him.

That afternoon, Aniela Jaffe handed me a document of inestimable value: the ten handwritten pages by Professor Jung.

Text of the Letters

Below I transcribe the two letters. Attached is the only one I received from Dr Jung, originally written in English and left unfinished due to his illness. He feared fatal consequences; however, Jung lived until 7 June 1961. His letter was signed on 14 September 1960. As he confessed, it took him over a month to write it.

"New Delhi, 7 May 1960.

Dear Dr Jung:

Your last letter was of the utmost importance to me, and thank you very much. How much truth there is in what you say! However, not everyone understands. Consider that it is impossible to find a solution to current problems in isolation from the betterment of the human person.

What about hunger and misery, and underdeveloped nations and the masses? And it is claimed that individualism and selfishness would be criminal if one sought to improve the individual in these circumstances. But, in reality, they are unaware of the workings of the mind. The mind functions like a tape recorder or a radio that sends and receives waves.

I remember once hearing a story: the angels asked God to destroy the world, because mankind had reached the limit of wickedness. But God showed them a hopeless place on earth where a little girl was praying. And God said... 'Why not destroy the world?' This girl, however, did nothing but pray, and this girl held the world; in a word, the world turns thanks to the unconscious and the modification of the unconscious with the cooperation or assistance of the conscious mind, the Path and illusions,

rational action, and external activity. It is not enough to be different; it is the ancient path of magic, alchemy, the mythical attitude. India, which lived so long in that position, sold it, and there is nothing more successful today; the same may be true of the East and people of colour in contrast, the West took the rational position, insisting that it will only bring misery upon you and even the world. A change is necessary. Therefore, Professor Toynbee said it would be best for the Western white man to withdraw behind the scenes and let other people carry out the external work, politics and the world

The Bachelor

ON WEDNESDAY, 10 May 1961, Professor Jung tried again. He didn't want to let too much time pass. Something urged me on imperatively. Twenty-seven days later, Jung died. I believe I was the last foreign friend to visit him, and I had a crucial conversation with him.

Right up until the last moment, I didn't know whether it would be possible to see him.

Mrs Ruth Bailey informed me by telephone that she would meet me on this day for tea and a chat, as Jung was bedridden and seriously ill. So I arrived in Küsnacht on the appointed day. We went into a small room on the ground floor. I expressed a wish to see the house. Miss Bailey showed me the dining room with its Renaissance paintings and noble, antique furniture. Then we sat in a small room where I could observe closely this extraordinary woman, who had accompanied Jung on his expeditions in Africa and cared for him during the last years of his life. She had an interesting face, elegant manners and a keen intelligence. A sense of calm emanated from her, wrapped in a painful anticipation. Somehow I was reminded of Miraben, Mahatma Gandhi's English disciple, who also accompanied that great man to the very end, after leaving India, having realised that Gandhi's atmosphere was lost. Miraben put down roots in Greece. Miss Bailey also left Switzerland after Jung's death and now works in England on a social project for the benefit of poor mothers. Both women felt lost, adrift, in a world deprived of the ideals they revered.

Whilst serving tea – this being an English ritual – Miss Bailey told me that I was a fortunate man, because Jung had experienced a sudden improvement that morning, expressing a desire to see me as soon as we had finished our tea. Meanwhile, Miss Bailey was lost in reflections on death.

'Carl Gustav accuses me of holding him down. Let's say you want me to leave and stop her… Yet it seems to me that he still wants to live because his vitality is revealed in his sharp sense of humour…

- Do you think there is something beyond death?

- It couldn't be otherwise... I couldn't imagine that Jung was completely extinguished at a moment like this...

And he makes a gesture of switching off a light, pressing a switch.

- There is also – still – psychological evidence of something akin to survival. The unconscious has a sense of continuity, the continuation of a life moving beyond the threshold of death. The unconscious seems to ignore a blunt end and does not miss death… Death now appears in Jung's dreams; the motif of death as something familiar...

He pauses and continues:

- I've been very busy these days, writing an essay for a US publisher, entitled 'Man and His Symbols'. This is a labour of love. I'm writing by hand and have completed eighty pages; I'm writing it directly in English, because I believe it will come out more simply, as German syntax obscures concepts.1

Miss Bailey serves me another cup of tea and, as Ninon Hesse and Elsy Bodmer also say:

- You and Jung have a good and deep relationship. He is happy when he sees you. He wanted to see you today.

1. The essay was not published on the date indicated in the United States. It was considered obscure and difficult; precisely what the author wished to avoid...

After another pause, she asks:

- Do you know the Bollingen Tower?

The tower she referred to was built by Jung in the countryside at Bollingen, by the lake; driven by an impulse and guided by dreams, he sought to express his idea of himself through stone. His psychological system is represented there. Jung used to shut himself away in his tower for weeks at a time. Sometimes he would go out on a sailing boat on the lake.

He lit the stove, cooked for himself and had neither electricity nor running water. On the walls of his stone tower, he inscribed the sayings of the alchemists, the Greeks and the Egyptian Gnostics; he also drew some sketches, symbols and mandalas.

- No, I mean I don't know.

- That's very interesting. If we go there, we'll see some of the rituals Jung performs there. One morning I accompanied him to the kitchen and saw him greeting each of the utensils: pots, pans, saucepans. He asked me to do the same. "They know and recognise," he told me. Jung always cooked in the same frying pan and the same pots; because they were his friends, he would say: old friends, with whom he had fought great battles of conversation in the solitude of his retreat. All things come alive in Jung's own life, or in the life he gives them, he gives them...

After tea, Miss Bailey wanted to go and visit Jung soon. She advised me that the visit should be brief, so as not to tire them.

For the last time whilst Jung was alive, I climbed the stairs to his house. Miss Bailey accompanied me upstairs, opened the study door and stepped back to leave us alone.

Professor Jung was sitting by the window, as in previous meetings. But now he was wearing a Japanese ceremonial kimono, so that in the evening light, he looked like a monk, a magician or a priest of some extinct cult from the past.

As I entered, he began to rise from his chair, which I hastened to prevent. I leaned towards him and handed him a gift I had brought from the East, a cashmere box inlaid with turquoise, like the one I had just given to Hermann Hesse in Montagnola.

'Hush, Circle.'

She held it in her old hands, patted it and said:

'Turquoise from Kashmir. I've never been there. I've only been to Bengal, in north-eastern India, and Madura, in the south... Thank you for this beautiful gift...'

- It's nothing,' he said. 'I just visited Hermann Hesse and we spoke of death. I asked him if he thought there was anything beyond death. He told me no, that perhaps death enters the collective unconscious; we are all encompassed within it...

- Your question was poorly phrased, says Jung. You need to put it this way: Is there any reason to believe there is life after death?

- And do you believe there is?

- If the mind can function without the brain, beyond space and time, then it would be incorruptible.

- And is that possible for the mind?

- Psychological phenomena seem to prove it. . . I even tried some experiments that might confirm it. Once I was very ill, almost in a coma. Everyone believes I suffered greatly. In fact, however, I

experienced a very pleasant state; it felt as though I were floating above my body, far away... After my father's death, I saw him several times... Strictly speaking, this does not mean I saw him in reality... It may be merely subjective phenomena...

- 'Why?' he asked. 'Perhaps this cannot happen outside rather than inside? Your dead father and the rest?' . . . Hesse was referring to the collective unconscious—something outside the individual that did not perish in death. Meyrink posits that the unconscious is the Mother of God and of all gods. . .

- I saw, continued Jung, those wounded by a bullet to the brain during the war, with the functions of the cerebral cortex paralysed; that is to say, with time and three-dimensional space disrupted. And yet, in their dreams, they had significant visions of the state. If their brain was paralysed, what part of the body produces dreams? What does a person dream when their brain is not functioning? Is it that part of the body that dreams? Is this the physical part? Could this suggest that the mind operates independently of the brain, space and time? . . . It is merely a hypothesis... Another clue: a child of four or five years old, for example, or even younger, who has no ego. His ego is diffuse, dispersed throughout his physiology. Yet this child has adult dreams, in the form of a very old, ancient figure, in which he is undoubtedly a character. If, scientifically speaking, there is still a childish ego, what is it that produces these fundamental dreams which distinguish the child and give him a lifelong character? If the temporal ego disappears with death, perhaps that other, deeper, aged one—which was bestowed upon the child along with a timeless dream—also disappears?

What honesty in this exceptional man! On the threshold of death, searching, and perhaps wanting to find a reason to believe, yet his scientific rigour prevented him from uttering a single word that did not conform to objectively demonstrable experience on this dangerous and slippery path he had chosen.

- Nobody today sees what lies behind words and ideas; nobody pays attention to these things. He merely puts forward the idea that something was there in a virtual form. That is what I did by giving new names to these realities. For example, the word 'unconscious'. I have just read a book, * *, by a Chinese Zen master. Reading it seemed to me as if he were simply giving other names to the same realities. The word 'unconscious' does not appear in his book, but here is what I have called by another name.

On a table, next to the chair where Jung is sitting, I see a book, *The Human Phenomenon*, by Teilhard de Chardin.

'Have you read it?' he asked.

'It's a great book,' says Jung.

His face is pale, yet bathed in an inner light. The wide sleeves of his oriental kimono are thin and his hands are wrinkled. On his finger, there is no Gnostic ring.

'What does this symbol mean?' I ask.

- It is Egyptian. It features a snake, which symbolises Christ. Above it is a woman's face; below, the number eight, a symbol of infinity, the labyrinth, the path of the unconscious. I have altered the ring slightly so that the symbol is Christian, as the jewellery predates Christianity. All these symbols are absolutely alive within me, and each of them triggers a certain reaction in my soul.

- The Lord is, in our time, a link to the hermeticism of the past; he has found the missing link, the path, the hidden path that was lost with the advent of the Enlightenment, or perhaps even earlier. Just as the Renaissance found the missing link to the classical era, so the Lord establishes a connection with its secret and hidden history. The path of the essential man has found a way back thanks to you. Meister Eckhart is thus confirmed...

- I tried to teach the Christian who the Redeemer is, what the Resurrection is, something lost in the night of the soul, which no one remembers, but which reappears in dreams...

- Some time ago in Florence I saw Leonardo's 'The Annunciation'. And the Massacre of the Innocents came to mind, an event that coincides with, or stands in stark contrast to, the birth of Jesus. Much has been said about the death of Jesus, but equally no one mourns the death of so many innocents, as if it had been accepted as necessary for the birth of the Redeemer. Likewise, when Krishna comes into the world, the tyrant orders the sacrifice of all children born that day in the land... The coming of the Redeemer, under these circumstances, seems tremendously unjust and, I would say, even harmful to the world, at least at the moment of his arrival... He wondered whether it is justified after all...

Jung remains silent for a moment and then says:

- It is often the best who are sacrificed...

- Master, don't you think you're talking about these things a little out of fashion, out of season, in the midst of this age of super-technology when man is embarking on space flight... Hesse was asked what he thought would happen to inner life, the life of the spirit and vision. And he proved to be pessimistic.

- Flights to other worlds in space are still a long way off. Sooner or later, man must return to Earth, to his own land, from whence he came, which will bring him back to himself. Space flight is an escape, an evasion, because it is easier to go to Mars or the Moon than to know oneself. However, no desire for cosmic conquest is not also the symbol of a longing for fulfilment. Mankind finds itself, moreover, at a crossroads of growth, in a desperate historical situation, with the increase in the world's population and the food crisis. In space flights... and the desire to conquer other worlds, there is also an instinctive aspiration to find a solution to these problems... Jung continued to develop this fascinating topic when the door opened and Miss Bailey entered. My visit had gone on too long. But my heart tells me that this would be the last. And I am sure Jung sensed it too.

Miss Bailey announced that one of Jung's daughters and her husband had come to see him and waited there afterwards.

I went back to say goodbye.

He clasped his hands together, bowing. And he walked slowly towards the door. When I reached it, I turned and saw him staring at me, bathed in the evening light, by the window, in his Eastern cloak.

Jung raised his hand and waved me goodbye.

A morning in India

He rose early. It was a morning of intense Indian summer. I went out onto my terrace bedroom, where the shadows of the wretched mango trees fell. I welcomed the sun and began my yoga exercises. In the glimmering light, I made out the light-bearer, turbaned and barefoot, approaching with the gentle cadence of his race. When he reached me, he placed his hands together and said, 'Namaste', which means, more or less, 'I salute the God within you'.

He handed me the telegram.

I opened it and began to read with difficulty, due to the excessive light. The telegram read: 'Professor Jung passed away peacefully yesterday.' Signed Bailey and Jaffe.

The bright light, the sun and the heat forced me to go outside.

I had gone to Delhi airport that morning to bid farewell to Nehru, who was leaving to rest in the Himalayas, in what is believed to be the Kulu Valley, or Valley of the Gods.

I arrived at the airport just as Nehru was boarding the plane. He was dressed in white and his graceful figure moved with elegance, exuding a kind of spiritual aura, a peculiar charm.

I showed him the telegram I had received that morning, for Nehru also admired Jung. I said to him:

'Do you know how interested Jung was in India? A message of condolence from you or your Government would be deeply appreciated.'

Nehru paused for a moment.

'I cannot give this order personally. I beg you to speak on my behalf to Mr Desai, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, and he will send a telegram of condolence on my behalf.'

And so it was that India was present at the death of the man who had done so much to understand the profound values of its civilisation, comparing them with those of the Western world and enriching it. Another great circle closes.

I spent the whole day in meditation, trying to fix the image of Jung and join him now that he had embarked upon the vicissitudes of the Great Journey and his transformation into the realm of darkness, or of the unknown lights, the very realm he once sought to penetrate, as described in his commentary on the Tibetan 'Book of the Dead'.

It was then that Hermann Hesse wrote that letter which was published in the special issue of the 'Neue Zürcher Zeitung' dedicated to Jung. I also wrote to Jung's family, Miss Bailey and Mrs Jaffe, to send my condolences.

Shortly afterwards, I received a letter from Miss Bailey, in which she recounted the final moments of her revered friend:

"Kusnacht – Zurich, 16 June 1961.

Dear Mr Serrano:

Thank you very much for your kind letter, which gave me courage. It was a privilege to look after C.G. Jung. And now that my work is finished, I feel completely lost and desolate. But the kind letters I receive from his friends help me greatly in my loneliness and feelings of uncertainty as I face life without him.

He died at the age of eighty, in great peace, whilst sleeping, and just as he wished. He felt very tired and weak. On 17 May, after a very quiet and very happy day, he suffered a stroke. This affected his speech, which made a great impression on me.

However, after a few days, he began to recover and his speech has improved almost completely, so that he could work again and read normally. Even so, I spent some time reading to him. Then, on 30 May, again after a very happy and peaceful day, whilst we were sitting in his library, drinking tea by the window, he lost consciousness. And that was the last time he was there; from that moment on, he had to retire to his room. He was growing weaker by the day. Two days before his death, he found himself out of his body, in a strange land, where he could see beautiful and marvellous things; I am sure of it. He smiled often and seemed happy. The last time I sat on the terrace, he told me he had had a dream. He said: 'Now I know the truth, though there is a small part that was unclear, and I know I am going to die.' He had yet another dream that he told me about that night. Through a huge round stone on a plateau; at the base of the stone he found the following phrase written: 'And this shall be a sign to you of wholeness and unity.'

I realised, without a doubt, that his life was over. During those days I saw clearly that he had left us. However, I put this conviction aside. Perhaps I was wrong because I did not allow myself to do everything that was right for him. I could have been with him day and night, for example.

Dear Mr Serrano, I could write much more, but I shall do so again when my mind is clearer. I shall tell you below of a series of strange things that have happened.

I am leaving for England, where I intend to stay for a couple of weeks, and in the meantime I will keep the house open.

What I am going to do here will take months. Family members are very affectionate towards me. I received a telegram from Mr Nehru and was deeply moved.

C.G. Jung felt great affection for you and your friendship is very precious to me. I always felt it was very easy to talk to you!

The turquoise box you brought back from India was given to me by him in his final days, in view of our mutual admiration and love for him. I hope you don't mind, unless you wish to have it back...

Thank you again,

Kind regards,

Ruth Bailey.

The Dream

On 20 October 1961, at six o'clock in the morning in the city of Mysore, India, I had a dream about Professor Jung.

I walk with him along a dusty road. He comes back to life. We walk side by side, our elbows brushing against one another. Two generations. He is too old, yet still young. A man passes by and greets us. Jung returned the greeting. For my part, I tipped my wide-brimmed hat. Jung spoke, saying he was too old. The walk, finally, and the fatigue of sleep. 'I am too old and I am tired. My skin is worn out and I must die. Ahead lies something that is paid for with great physical suffering, as you well know.'

I understand that he has returned, coming back from his stroke. I tell him that the body's sufferings have been compensated by knowledge, since we now know what death is, just as scientists have discovered what life is. And I ask:

- What is death?

Answer me:

- Death is Ly and Tata.

I know nothing of it and confess. I suppose it translates as:

- Water and stone.

And it continues:

- I spent eighty years trying to see what lay behind the water. When the water was just me. It happened in the water. Now, at last, to emerge from this water where the horses run...

Look at the next channel. The water overflows. There is nothing. I wish I could write down the word of God. Jung continues speaking now as if enlightened, uttering phrases of sublime poetry. I hear them, I hold them, but I know I will forget them instantly; they are words that cannot be kept, for they are revelations; they are heard, appreciated and lost.

This whole scene is a terrible impression of desolation, in the face of the mystery of death. I wanted to believe, but I fear that, amongst the dead, Jung has discovered nothing; there is nothing. Although he may have wished to reveal that life continues beyond the individual, the forces of nature and perhaps something more, the avant-garde of poetry.

Accompanied by a sharp pain in the chest.

Jung Volta Cobrar Me In Your Home

In the first part of the book, I recounted that, following Hesse's death, I went with my eldest son to visit his widow.

Back in Montagnola, I would have liked my son to have known Jung's house too.

We arrived one afternoon in Kusnacht and walked through the garden until we found ourselves in front of the gate with the Latin inscription. We rang the bell and waited. My son opened the door. He was one of Jung's grandsons.

I explained who I was and what I wanted; but the young man replied that his parents weren't at home, so he couldn't let us in.

We were just about to give up when a car drove into the garden and pulled up in front of us. A woman got out.

She was Jung's daughter, Mrs Niehul-Jung, the boy's aunt.

Recognising me, she invited us in immediately. And she explained:

- The house has been taken over by my brother, the architect. And so, life goes on, just as my father would have liked... It's very strange what happened. I went to another place, without thinking what to do here, and I strayed from my path, as if I were being guided...

Jung welcomed me back into his home; he couldn't help but treat me like a stranger at the door. And with a sense of restraint, he led my son upstairs, towards the study. Not everything is as it was before. The bookshelves are there; yet the desk is missing, and something is missing from the atmosphere. Siva remains on Mount Kailash.

Trying to relive our last meeting, the farewell. And with my eyes half-closed, I imagine that Dr Jung is at the window.

Mrs Niehul-Jung tells us that once a week, in accordance with her father's wishes, the valuable alchemist's library is opened to the public.

Then she takes us into the garden, because she wanted to show us something. Recently, many old trees were felled to open up the view of the lake. She leads us to the tree in whose shade Jung used to sit and shows us a large scar that runs up and down the trunk, almost its entire length.

- When my father died, a storm raged in Küsnacht. It never occurred to him that at this time of year, a bolt of lightning would strike the tree in whose shade he used to sit.

Here is the mark of the heavenly fire, which is also a sign that Jung stands at the centre of universal forces. Nature responded: in sync, moved, stirred.

If in my dream the anxiety and doubt that now surround me, other significant events came to the fore to balance the weight of it all. Or perhaps I am not qualified to interpret a dream?

I hear my son say:

'How beautiful it is here! I want to live in this place forever.'

He stands by the lake, where the gentle waves come to lap at his feet.

In the cemetery is the grave of the Jung family in Kusnacht. I'm going to visit it.

On the ground I see a round stone with a hole in the centre to collect rainwater, water from the sky.

Another upright stone bears the family coat of arms, forming a square around it, with the following inscription:

"First, the earthly man on earth." "Second, the heavenly man from the heavens." It is a phrase from St Paul, I believe.

Following the same phrase found on the Jung family's front door: "Whether invoked or not, God is present."

A myth for our time

At the end of his letter of 14 September 1960, Jung wrote:

"I guard my light and my treasure, convinced that no one would benefit from it—and I would be hopelessly wounded—if it were lost, for it is what is highest and most precious, not only to me, but also, above all, to the darkness of the Creator who needs man to illuminate his creation."

In his epitaph, this thought is brought to completion. It also recounts what he said in his letter about the chief of the Ochwián Biano Indians, who believed he helped the Sun rise each morning. And Jung seeks to find for modern man a myth just as transcendent or life-affirming as that. This is revealed in his life, in his years of work: to illuminate the darkness of the Creator, to design the light of consciousness from that boundless, bottomless sea and from the unconscious, which is, perhaps, none other than God… This is the very living and transcendent myth available to modern man, though not to all men.

To bring consciousness to the fore, in the Jungian sense, means not to rationalise, but to design with 'the light that is one's treasure' and which emanates from that very 'central' mysterious person, the individual, in order to confront the realm of darkness and gradually incorporate it in an endless process.

Jung sees in the eyes of animals suffering through the night of creation the fear of a region where there is still no light. And he believes he discovers that they need us; they hope that we will reveal to the world the mystery of their painful existences, that we will reflect upon and contemplate them, projecting them into the light. In a word, so that we may become the mirror of creation—animal, tree, river, stone, and perhaps even God. Ultimately, they are the consciousness of the world, the mirror of the flower; nature shapes us through the ages, so that we may reveal and contemplate its ephemeral nature in its evanescence. And there, therefore, are the beings, the sacramental objects, waiting for us. We pass by and do not know. We pass by without seeing, without looking. We pass by without knowing that the flower cries out in pain because we admire it, that the sun greets us, awaiting our day, that the sun needs us to help it stay at its zenith, that the Earth wants to be aided in its rotation. And when we do look at the flower, it knows it, feels it, and returns this gaze with some form of love, perhaps as we dissolve into the earth.

Rilke said in his Duino Elegies something that Jung would undoubtedly agree with:

For to be here is too much, and because everything

hence the need for that appearance, evanescent,

which in a delicate way moves us.

For us, the most fleeting thing. Once

everything. Just once. Once and no more.

And also once. Never again. But

it has been given to them, even if only once;

there was earth, it seems irrevocable.

And these things that live are death

that you may understand them, you praised them; perishable,

trust us, the most fleeting, to be capable of

Keep.

Let us compel them to turn around us,

in our invisible heart – oh, infinitely! – In

us

Who wants us to end.

Earth, that is not what you want: to make it spring

invisible within us? – Is it not your dream

to be invisible? Earth! Invisible!

So that it is not the processing of anything

is your urgent command?

Man is a product of nature, yet he rebels against it, because it seems you do not accept it; this is perhaps due to the fact that there is also in nature something more than a blind being and suffering, another force that runs through it from end to end and drives us to sacrifice ourselves, to rebel.

But this 'other force' is, perhaps, also part of nature; that is to say, what drives us is the very same rebellion that leads us to love it. As a child, I lost myself in the paradise of contemplating the world around me, united with the plants and the spirits of nature. And this was perhaps because there was no god of suffering and pleasure, calling out to us, waiting for us to reveal the depths of its joys and miseries; for, as the alchemist said: 'Man must complete the work that nature left incomplete.'

Teilhard de Chardin wrote:

"The Earth will lift the Mother in her giant arms and see the face of God whom she passionately loves, hidden in the forces that sustain the earth."

And then:

"Everyone who has loved Jesus, hidden in the forces that cause the Earth to die, when they faint, will raise their giant maternal arms and awaken themselves in the bosom of God."

According to Rilke, here we shall have a few words, perhaps the word 'home', 'steel', 'amphora', 'fruitful'. Each word will be more beloved. And also plenty of yellow or blue gentian.

Yes. I believe this is the myth of modern man, which Jung taught towards the end of his life and exemplified throughout his existence.

For me, there is also something else: there is a final flower, a flower of pure creation, a mythical and non-existent flower, which can no longer be of nature and which is what truly lies at the heart of Jung's magical tradition that spans the ages.

The flower is not found in what he calls the Self, the circle whose circumference is everywhere and whose centre is nowhere. This central figure must be invented because, although it never existed, it always existed implicitly in potential.

That is to say: eternity, immortality, is an invention; it is creation. The soul itself is a masterpiece, a human construct. One must believe that the Centre and the flower still exist even when they do not yet exist, even when they never existed. 'Blessed are those who do not see and yet believe…'

And this act of pure creation, of pure absence, seems so fundamental that, when it occurs, all of nature responds by drawing on its breath and power. And then, a bolt of lightning strikes a tree, to indicate that it played out in the centre of your abyssal heart.

Conclusion

One morning, high in the Himalayas, in the religious town of Almora, I observed my friend Bochi Sen: sitting cross-legged in the Hindu manner and covered with a blanket he had brought from Spain, he let his tears flow down his brown cheeks as he recounted his experiences in the Garden of Gethsemane during his pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

Suddenly he changed the subject and began to talk about Dr Jung and a visit he had made to Zurich a few years earlier. My Hindu friend was deeply impressed because Jung had told him that if he were to live again through reincarnation, and could choose his life, he would choose the same one.

Hesse and Jung lived their lives to the full, filling them with meaning: perhaps they are among the last few men to do so. The work they produced was an expression of their nature. If I had to point out a difference between the two, I would say that Hesse found greater peace, greater serenity than Jung did at the end of his days. Jung seemed to be searching for something right up to the very last moment. Perhaps he could be said to have aspired to be a Magus, unlike the saint, who does not seek fusion, or destruction, nor the peace of God, nor happiness, but rather walks through the eternal, the great misfortune. But I do not know. And I also believe that Jung was not a scientist; had he expressed his research and discoveries in a style suited to the current mindset, he would have appeared to the people of our time as a strange character, recounting fantastical and dubious experiments. He expounded in new terms that coincide with the mysteries and the eternal tradition which, in one way or another, are at odds with the language of official science. So it is very likely that this tradition underlies Jung's work, precisely what he sought to indicate in this book: the Catena Aurea, the Hermetic Circle.

I understand that if I was admitted alongside Hesse and Jung, it was perhaps for this reason—that is, the need to highlight that part of their message, which tells of what I have witnessed in their company. Our duty is not limited to the facts alone; it is also bound up with the men themselves. We must pass on the message from generation to generation.

When I finish this book of memories of these two great men, I feel their presence around me – even though this happens only within me – as if they had something more to say to me, even though it is something that eludes me . . .

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